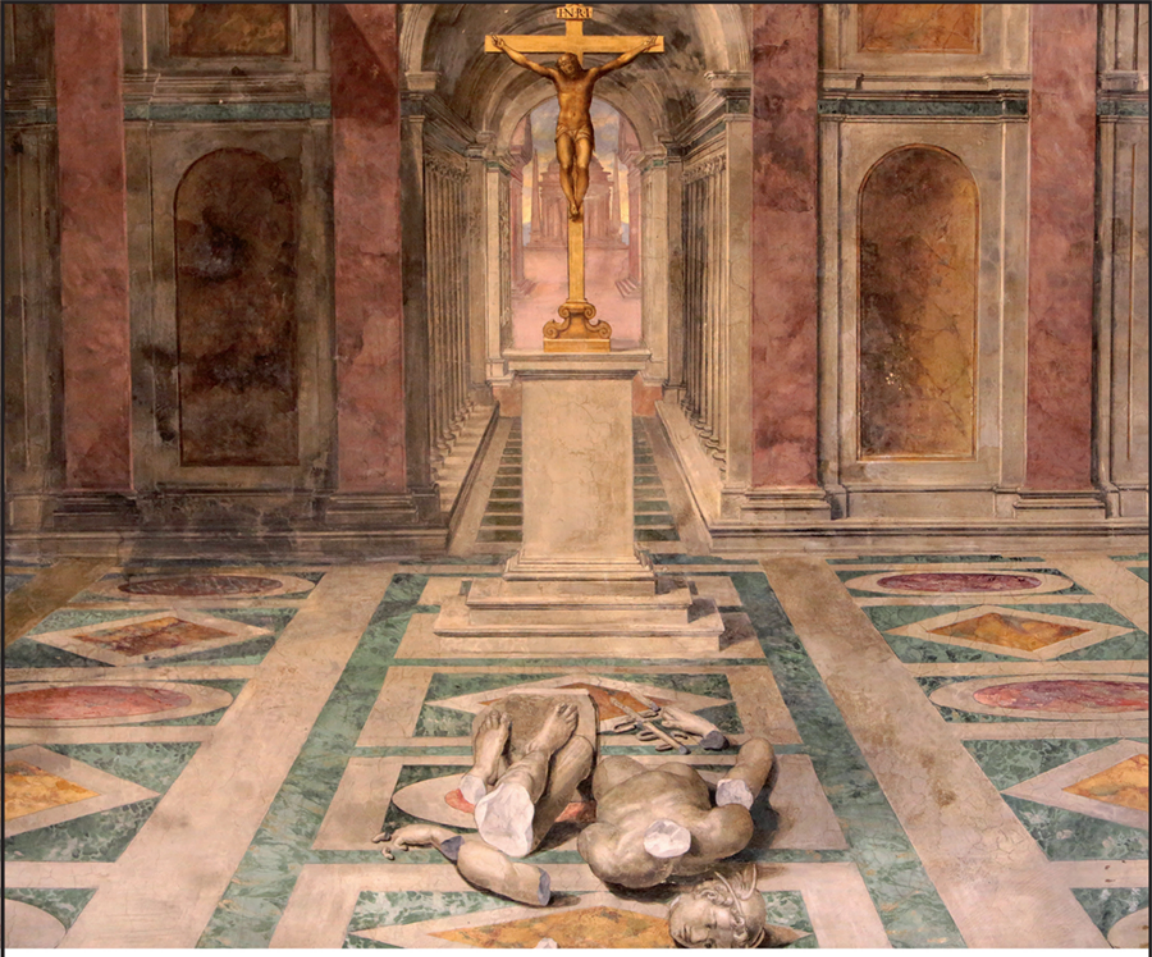

Religious Violence in the Ancient World

From Classical Athens to Late Antiquity

Edited by Jitse H. F. Dijkstra and Christian R. Raschle

RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Much like our world today, Late Antiquity (fourth to seventh century CE) is often seen as a period rife with religious violence, not least because the literary sources are full of stories of Christians attacking temples, statues and 'pagans'. However, using insights from Religious Studies, recent studies have demonstrated that the Late Antique sources disguise a much more intricate reality. The present volume builds on this recent cutting-edge scholarship on religious violence in Late Antiquity in order to come to more nuanced judgements about the nature of the violence. At the same time, the focus on Late Antiquity has taken away from the fact that the phenomenon was no less prevalent in the earlier Graeco-Roman world. This book is therefore also the first to bring together scholars with expertise ranging from classical Athens to Late Antiquity to examine the phenomenon in all its complexity and diversity throughout Antiquity.

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RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

From Classical Athens to Late Antiquity

EDITED BY

JITSE H. F. DIJKSTRA

University of Ottawa

and

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Université de Montréal

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Acknowledgements

It was during the Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of Canada on 6–9 May 2014 that we first discussed organising a conference together. Since Dijkstra was at that time preparing a large-scale research project on religious violence in Late Antique Egypt, we settled on religious violence as a timely topic that reunited both our research interests and those of our home institutions. We thus decided to organise an international workshop, which would bring together for the first time leading specialists on Graeco-Roman religions and Late Antiquity, including Religious Studies scholars, historians of religion, biblical scholars, scholars of early Christianity, classicists and ancient historians, to reflect together upon the phenomenon of religious violence throughout Antiquity.

The workshop was held under a similar title to that of the current volume at the home institutions of both editors, the Université de Montréal and the University of Ottawa, between 28 and 30 September 2017. The conference was opened (on 28 September) with a public keynote address at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Montreal, by the distinguished historian of (ancient) religions, Jan Bremmer, who gave an overview of the phenomenon of religious violence in Antiquity illustrated by several concrete cases, thus setting the scene for the rest of the programme. Two days of lectures followed, one day in Montreal (29 September) with specialists in Graeco-Roman religions, one day in Ottawa (30 September) with those specialising in Late Antiquity. In order to disseminate the specific theme of the workshop to a wider audience, eminent scholar of contemporary religion Hans Kippenberg concluded the programme by giving a public lecture on religious violence in both its ancient and modern contexts.

We would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for awarding us a Connection grant, which funded most of the workshop. Our sincere thanks also go to Les Belles Soirées de l'Université de Montréal for hosting the opening talk by

Bremmer, as well as to the Faculté des arts et des sciences, the Institut des études religieuses, the Centre d'études classiques and the Département d'histoire at the Université de Montréal and the Faculty of Arts and the central administration at the University of Ottawa for additional financial support. We are also immensely grateful to the 'Religion and Diversity Project' of Lori Beaman (University of Ottawa) for co-organising the closing lecture by Kippenberg and to Her Excellency Sabine Sparwasser, Ambassador of Germany to Canada, for covering his travel costs, speaking a few words of welcome before the talk and offering the wonderful reception that followed it.

It was a joy to see graduate students from both institutions mingle at the Emerging Scholars Seminar that was held by the Association des étudiants du Centre d'études classiques de l'Université de Montréal in collaboration with the Graduate Students' Association in Classics and Religious Studies of the University of Ottawa on the afternoon before the conference (on 28 September). The Seminar was led by Peter Van Nuffelen, whom we kindly thank for his expert feedback on the students' papers. The team of graduate students who assisted in the practicalities of the workshop (including driving the speakers by minibus from Montreal to Ottawa on the night of 29 September) and engaged freely with speakers throughout the conference also contributed in large part to its success.

Finally, sincere thanks are due to the participants who responded with enthusiasm and encouragement to the initial plans of organising the conference and supplied titles and abstracts as required for the SSHRC application more than nine months before the event. Preliminary versions of the speakers' papers were circulated well in advance of the conference, which stimulated and focused the discussions at the workshop and has no doubt significantly contributed to the coherence of this volume. After the conference, we were able to include seventeen of the eighteen papers delivered at the workshop in the present collection. The contributors have again been extremely cooperative in providing additional information where needed during the editing process. A special word of thanks is reserved for Roxanne Bélanger Sarrazin, who, besides her contributions to the organisation of the workshop, acted as our Research Assistant and as such was responsible for the basic editing of the papers and the General Index.

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A Note on Abbreviations

Throughout this book, journals are abbreviated according to J. Marouzeau (ed.), *L'année philologique: bibliographie critique et analytique de l'antiquité gréco-latine* (Paris, 1924–), available online at https://about.brepolis.net/aph-abreviations/ and reference works and corpora according to S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 2012), available online at https://oxfordre.com/classics/page/abbreviation-list/. Epigraphical abbreviations follow the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (*SEG*) (Leiden and Amsterdam, 1923–), available online at http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/supplementum-epigraphicum-graecum/abbreviations-aabbr. For papyrological abbreviations, see J. F. Oates et al. (eds.), *Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, 5th ed. (Atlanta, 2001), an updated version of which is available online at http://papyri.info/docs/checklist. Other abbreviations used are:

CPJ	V. A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks and M. Stern, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1957–64).
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (Leuven, 1903–).
EDR	Epigraphic Database Roma, available online at www.edr-edr.it/English/introduc_en.php.
NETS	A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford, 2007).
NRSV	B. M. Metzger, R. C. Dentan and W. Harrelson (eds.), *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version* (New York, 1989).

RGG[4]	H. D. Betz et al. (eds.), *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 4th ed., 8 vols. (Tübingen, 1998–2005).
Suppl. It.	*Supplementa Italica* (Rome, 1981–).

*General Introduction**

Jitse H. F. Dijkstra and Christian R. Raschle

Situation in Current Research and Themes of the Volume

At the start of the twenty-eighth chapter of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon (1737–94) writes:

> The ruin of Paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition; and may therefore deserve to be considered, as a singular event in the history of the human mind.[1]

Having described the rapid triumph of Christianity under Constantine in chapter 20, and the short revival of traditional religion by Julian in chapter 23, according to Gibbon the final reckoning with the Graeco-Roman religious tradition took place by the removal of the altar of Victory from the Senate house under Gratian and the subsequent imperial legislation under Theodosius I. The latter incited an empire-wide attack by Christian fanatics on temples, statues and other objects of worship, resulting, for example, in the famous destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/92 CE. The success of this systematic campaign aimed at the 'fall of Paganism' was so complete, says Gibbon, that by 423 Theodosius' grandson (Theodosius II) hardly noticed that there were any traces of the old religion left.[2]

The central tenets of Gibbon's sweeping narrative of the religious transformation that took place in Late Antiquity (fourth to seventh

* Many thanks to Jan Bremmer for sharing with us the concluding remarks that he presented at the conference and for his comments on preliminary versions of this introduction. We would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for incisive comments that led to further sharpening of our text, and Wendy Mayer for final corrections.

[1] E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 3 (London, 1781), ed. D. Womersley, vol. 2 (London, 1994) 71.

[2] Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall* 2, 90. Gibbon's remark refers to *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.22.

century CE), of a violent conflict between 'pagans' and Christians resulting in a speedy victory of the latter, captivated scholarship until the 1980s.[3] With his 1971 *The World of Late Antiquity*, however, Peter Brown opened up new ways of looking at the period in general and the process of religious transformation in particular.[4] Late Antiquity is now seen in much more positive terms as a dynamic period of cultural change, in which monolithic views of the 'decline of paganism' and the 'triumph of Christianity' have been replaced with a much more intricate web of religious interactions in a world that only gradually became Christian.[5]

Despite these trends in scholarship, the idea that religious violence was widespread in Late Antiquity has remained persistent, which is no doubt in large part because our sources abound with dramatic stories of zealous bishops and fanatical monks attacking temples, statues and adherents of the Graeco-Roman religions. Take, for instance, the *Life of Porphyry*, a Greek hagiographical work ascribed to a certain Mark the Deacon, which describes the actions of this bishop against 'paganism' in his see of Gaza, including the burning, with the emperor's approval, of the main temple of Marnas and its conversion into a splendid church.[6] It does not come as a surprise, then, that, whereas before religious violence was often merely treated as a given, in the aftermath of 9/11 the topic has generated enormous interest and has grown into one of the most hotly debated issues in Late Antique studies.[7] The idea amongst not just scholars that

[3] E.g. J. Geffcken, *Der Ausgang des griechisch-römischen Heidentums* (Heidelberg, 1920); A. Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1924); A. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963). For the remainder of this section we rework, expand and update J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered: The Cases of Alexandria, Panopolis and Philae', *Journal of Early Christian History* 6 (2015) 24–48 at 26–29 (repr. in W. Mayer and C. de Wet [eds.], *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* [London, 2018] 211–33 at 211–13).

[4] P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad* (London, 1971).

[5] E.g. R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (AD 100–400)* (New Haven, 1984); R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London, 1986); F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1993–94); R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, 1997); P. Chuvin, *Chronique des derniers païens: la disparition du paganisme dans l'Empire romain, du règne de Constantin à celui de Justinien*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 2009); É. Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, 2012); C. P. Jones, *Between Pagan and Christian* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).

[6] See, for more detail on this episode, Bremmer, this volume, pp. 62–66.

[7] E.g. J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (Berlin, 2004); M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2005); H. A. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2006); J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (eds.), *From Temple to*

religious violence was endemic in the period following the rise of Christianity is so pervasive that it has recently been reawakened in public perception through the Hollywood movie *Agora* (2009), and one cannot fail to observe that the topic is closely related to the current interests and *mentalité*.[8]

Even if these studies have contributed to a growing awareness of the complexity of the phenomenon, paying greater attention, for instance, to the much more devastating cases of intra-religious violence,[9] the subject has until recently remained largely undertheorised. For example, not one of the mentioned studies discusses the terms 'religion' and 'violence' in any depth, if at all. In this respect, we can learn much from recent publications in Religious Studies analysing religious violence in contemporary contexts. When using the term 'violence', scholars often think of physical violence, but in fact it can denote a diversity of actions, from verbal abuse to actual bodily violence. The terminology proposed by the founder of Peace and Conflict Studies, Johan Galtung, is useful here, as it distinguishes between direct (physical), structural (embedded in social structures) and cultural (symbolic) violence, of which the interrelations need to be studied together.[10] The interpretative difficulties of the term 'religion' are also well known. The ancient context, in particular, has led to much debate as for most of Antiquity there was no clearly demarcated religious sphere and the ancients did not have a word for religion as we know it, leading some scholars to denounce the term altogether;[11] hence even 'religious violence'

Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity (Leiden, 2008); T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009); P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2010); E. J. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley, 2010); B. Isele, *Kampf um Kirchen: Religiöse Gewalt, heiliger Raum und christliche Topographie in Alexandria und Konstantinopel (4. Jh.)* (Münster, 2010); B. D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), with the discussion of this book by M. A. Tilley, D. Frankfurter, P. Frederiksen and B. D. Shaw in *JECS* 21 (2013) 291–309 and by C. Ando, C. Conybeare, C. Grey, N. Lenski and H. A. Drake in *JLA* 6 (2013) 197–263; T. Myrup Kristensen, *Making and Breaking the Gods: Christian Responses to Pagan Sculpture in Late Antiquity* (Aarhus, 2013); M.-F. Baslez (ed.), *Chrétiens persécuteurs: destructions, exclusions, violences religieuses au IV^e siècle* (Paris, 2014); S. Ratti (ed.), *Une Antiquité tardive noire ou heureuse?* (Besançon, 2015).

[8] See also Mayer, this volume, p. 255.

[9] E.g. Isele, *Kampf um Kirchen*; Shaw, *Sacred Violence*.

[10] J. Galtung, 'Cultural Violence', *Journal of Peace Research* 27 (1990) 291–305, and *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London, 1996) 196–210. See also Bremmer, p. 48, and Bendlin, pp. 144–45, both this volume.

[11] B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, 2013); C. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York, 2016). See also Mason, pp. 110–11, Bendlin, pp. 140–41, Rives, p. 177, and Mayer, pp. 257–58, all this volume.

has now been challenged as a heuristic term.[12] Every student of religious violence, then, should keep in mind the complexity and problematic nature of the terminology used.[13]

In approaching religious violence, we can equally benefit from the recent progress in Religious Studies on this topic, which has enjoyed a massive interest since 9/11. A major debate has revolved around the question of whether religious violence is rooted in monotheism, a thesis that was advocated in a number of studies by the Egyptologist and cultural historian Jan Assmann,[14] thus reviving a line of thought going back to Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume (1711–76) that polytheism is tolerant whereas monotheism is intolerant.[15] Yet recent research in Religious Studies has convincingly argued against this image by demonstrating that religious violence is a complex phenomenon that exists in all places and times (hence it is too simplistic to say that it is caused by monotheism, and the most recent studies therefore rather speak of 'religion and violence' in order to preclude any compelling relationship between the two),[16] and is frequently interwoven with political, social and economical factors. As a result, fine-grained analyses of case studies, in which due attention is given to the local and historical contexts in which the violence arises, should be the norm.[17]

Taking their cue from these recent developments in Religious Studies, Late Antique scholars increasingly realise that the perception of the prevalence of religious violence, concomitant with the Enlightenment view of the definitive establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire as coercive and violent (which, through Gibbon, has influenced, as we have seen, much of subsequent scholarship in Late Antique studies), stands in

[12] See Mason, this volume, pp. 131–32, countered in particular by Bendlin, pp. 141–42, and Mayer, pp. 257–58 both this volume.

[13] As is well illustrated by Van Nuffelen's discussion, in Chapter 11 of this volume, of a related term, the concept of coercion, in Late Antiquity.

[14] J. Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich, 2003); Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Vienna, 2006). See also Kippenberg, pp. 17–18, Bremmer, pp. 49–50, and Mayer, p. 256, all this volume.

[15] D. Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (London, 1757), in the edition by J. C. A. Gaskin, *David Hume: Principal Writings on Religion* (Oxford, 1993) 160–63. See also Kippenberg, pp. 17–18, Bremmer, p. 49, and Bendlin, p. 136, all this volume.

[16] See also Kippenberg, pp. 18–19, and Bremmer, p. 67, both this volume. In this book, we have opted to maintain, for the sake of convenience, the term 'religious violence', while realising the problematic nature and complexity of the term, as set out above.

[17] We will mention here only W. T. Cavenaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford, 2009); H. G. Kippenberg, *Violence as Worship: Religious Wars in the Age of Globalization* (Stanford, 2011); M. Jerryson, M. Juergensmeyer and M. Kitts (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence* (Oxford, 2013); S. Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence* (Oxford, 2014); M. Juergensmeyer, M. Kitts and M. Jerryson (eds.), *Violence and the World's Religious Traditions: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2017).

the way of a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Several scholars have problematised the term 'religious violence' and successfully applied the Religious Studies framework to the ancient evidence.[18]

Such an enriched understanding of religious violence accords well with two recent trends within the field. First of all, Late Antique scholars have increasingly scrutinised the literary accounts that describe violence between Christians and 'pagans'.[19] To come back to the *Life of Porphyry* mentioned above, this work has now been demonstrated to date to the sixth century, which significantly decreases its trustworthiness as a historical source for the events around 400 it is describing.[20] At the same time a large amount of archaeological data has been made available that enables us to counterbalance the picture of the literary sources. A major theme has been the changing sacred landscape in Late Antiquity. In a classic study, clearly written in the tradition of Gibbon, Friedrich Deichmann (1909–93) posited, mostly on the basis of literary sources, that the destruction of temples and their conversion into churches was widespread in the fourth and fifth centuries.[21] The archaeological evidence that is now available from throughout the Mediterranean, however, proves that both were in fact rather exceptional.[22] Thus it is clear that events described in the Late Antique sources were often dramatised for ideological reasons and

[18] E.g. J. N. Bremmer, 'Religious Violence and Its Roots: A View from Antiquity', *Asdiwal* 6 (2011) 71–79 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 30–42), and 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', in A. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) 8–30; W. Mayer, 'Religious Conflict: Definitions, Problems and Theoretical Approaches', in W. Mayer and B. Neil (eds.), *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam* (Berlin, 2014) 1–20, and 'Re-Theorising Religious Conflict', in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 3–29, as well as the other contributions in that volume.

[19] E.g. S. Emmel, U. Gotter and J. Hahn, '"From Temple to Church": Analysing a Late Antique Phenomenon of Transformation', in Hahn et al., *From Temple to Church*, 1–22; R. S. Bagnall, 'Models and Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Antique Egypt', in Hahn et al., *From Temple to Church*, 23–41 at 25–32; L. Lavan, 'The End of the Temples: Towards a New Narrative?', in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden, 2011) xv–lxv. See for this point also Dijkstra, this volume, pp. 286–87.

[20] T. D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen, 2010) 260–83; A. Lampadaridi, *La conversion de Gaza au christianisme: la Vie de S. Porphyre de Gaza par Marc le Diacre* (Brussels, 2016) 15–19. See also Bremmer, this volume, pp. 64–66.

[21] F. W. Deichmann, 'Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern', *JDAI* 54 (1939) 105–36 (repr. in his *Rom, Ravenna, Konstantinopel, Naher Osten: Gesammelte Studien zur spätantiken Architektur, Kunst und Geschichte* [Wiesbaden, 1982] 56–94).

[22] E.g. B. Ward Perkins, 'Reconfiguring Sacred Space: From Pagan Shrines to Christian Churches', in G. Brands and H.-G. Severin (eds.), *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung* (Wiesbaden, 2003) 285–90; R. Bayliss, *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion* (Oxford, 2004); Hahn, Emmel and Gotter, *From Temple to Church*; Lavan and Mulryan, *Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*.

belie a much more intricate reality in which religious violence only occasionally occurred in special local or regional circumstances.[23]

The current volume intends to build on this recent scholarship on religious violence in Late Antiquity by using the insights from Religious Studies in order to come to more nuanced judgements about the nature of the violence.[24] Together the chapters collected here highlight the wide range of different kinds of violence, from violence transmitted through discourse to physical violence and from single events to longer-term processes; the various factors, besides religious ones, involved in cases of 'religious violence'; and the methodological issues encountered in interpreting them. Some chapters also display an openness, as is *de rigueur* in Religious Studies, to applying models from other disciplines in order to elucidate the phenomenon under study as much as possible.[25]

An innovative aspect of this book, which follows logically from the idea that religious violence is not peculiar to particular religions but can occur in all places and times, is the inclusion of studies on the earlier Graeco-Roman world. For the focus on Late Antiquity has too often obscured the fact that the phenomenon was also, if of course differently, present in earlier periods of Antiquity. The reason for this imbalance can once again be found in Enlightenment thinking, and the thesis of polytheistic tolerance versus monotheistic intolerance. Just as Gibbon's view of the Christian Roman empire as violent and coercive was informed by this thesis, so was his portrayal of the Roman state in previous centuries as advocating 'universal toleration' in the domain of religion.[26] Even if the view of religious tolerance in the first centuries of our era has long been proved incorrect and the debate has become significantly more sophisticated,[27] such ideas still permeate many recent studies of religions in the Graeco-Roman world.[28] But in the same way as the picture of Christian

[23] E.g. Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered', with the comments of Mayer, this volume, pp. 261–63.

[24] In this sense, it can be seen as a successor volume to Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, which uses the same approach.

[25] E.g. in this volume the chapters of Eidinow (anthropology: pp. 71–72) and Dijkstra (social psychology: pp. 288–91).

[26] E.g. in his famous sixteenth chapter, Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall* I, 514.

[27] The seminal study is P. Garnsey, 'Religious Toleration in Classical Antiquity', in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Oxford, 1984) 1–27; see also e.g. J. Losehand, '"The Religious Harmony in the Ancient World": Vom Mythos religiöser Toleranz in der Antike', *GFA* 12 (2009) 99–132.

[28] E.g. J. Scheid, 'Les religions', in F. Jacques and J. Scheid (eds.), *Rome et l'intégration de l'Empire (44 av. J.-C.–260 ap. J.-C.)*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1990) 111–28 at 126: 'polythéiste et non doctrinal, le système religieux des Romains était forcément tolérant à l'égard des pratiques religieuses privées',

intolerance and widespread violence in Late Antiquity has been nuanced, so we should transcend the prevailing picture of polytheistic tolerance and allow that religious violence did occur in earlier periods of Antiquity, in various manifestations.[29]

To redress the balance, this book therefore brings together, for the first time, scholars with expertise ranging from classical Athens to Late Antiquity to examine the phenomenon in all its complexity and diversity throughout Antiquity. The resulting case studies will serve to complexify the picture of religious tolerance in the Graeco-Roman world and place the developments of Late Antiquity in a long-term perspective, covering events in the thousand years from the fourth century BCE until the sixth century CE, while at the same time highlighting specific local and historical factors.

Overview of Contributions to the Volume

This volume contains seventeen of the eighteen papers delivered at the international workshop held at Montreal/Ottawa on 28–30 September 2017 (see Acknowledgements above). We have maintained the division at the conference of the two full days of papers, with those of Montreal focusing on religious violence in the Graeco-Roman world (Part II) and those of Ottawa on Late Antiquity (Part III). With seven and eight chapters, respectively, these sections are almost evenly balanced out. Within this structure the chapters have been placed in roughly chronological order. The key-note lectures by Kippenberg and Bremmer (Chapters 1 and 2) have been placed at the beginning (Part I) as 'Methodenkapitel' that serve to lay out the theoretical, methodological and chronological framework for the book. The chapters by Mayer and Van Nuffelen at the start of Part III (Chapters 10 and 11) function as separate introductions to the issues at stake for the Late Antique period.

The present book does not claim to be exhaustive in any way. Part II focuses heavily on the Roman empire and, regrettably, includes only one chapter on ancient Greece (another paper was commissioned but eventually could not be delivered for the volume). Still, the cases discussed in Chapter 1 by Kippenberg (Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids) and

and *Les dieux, l'État et l'individu: réflexions sur la religion civique à Rome* (Paris, 2013) 170, remarking on the Bacchanalia affair of 186 BCE: 'On peut dire que c'était la société romaine qui était intolérante, mais pas ses religions'.

[29] See Bremmer, 'Religious Violence and Its Roots', 73–77, and 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', 12–18, making this point, with Raschle, this volume, p. 88, and the detailed remarks by Bendlin, this volume, pp. 136–38.

Chapter 2 by Bremmer (fourth-century impiety processes), as well as Chapter 3 by Eidinow, provide enough incentive for future scholars to further explore the topic of violence and Greek religion. Dependent on the expertise of the invited speakers, the chapters in Part III verge towards the Eastern Roman empire in Late Antiquity, though Chapter 10 by Mayer is general and Chapter 11 by Van Nuffelen is concerned with Augustine (and note also Chapter 9 by Digeser on Lactantius at the end of Part II). Nevertheless, these chapters offer a representative set of case studies that allows for a comparative examination and interpretation of religious violence in the Graeco-Roman and Late Antique periods.

Part I contains two introductory chapters that cover the two main themes of the book, the Religious Studies approach and the opening up of the study of religious violence to the Graeco-Roman world. In Chapter 1, Hans G. Kippenberg provides an overview of the current state of affairs on religious violence in Religious Studies. He starts by refuting the existence of a causal relationship between religion and violence, placing the emphasis instead on the religious communities that generate the violence. He illustrates this link with two case studies, a modern (9/11) and an ancient one (the Maccabean revolt), in which in each case a secular conflict is defined in religious terms and a model ('prefiguration') from the community's sacred tradition (Quran, Bible) is taken as a script for action; the link between religious communities and violence is further cemented by looking at the different perspectives of Jews and Muslims on the Middle East conflict. The chapter ends with a list of methodological rules for studying religious violence in terms of social action.

In Chapter 2, Jan N. Bremmer takes a long-term perspective on religious violence in Antiquity, discussing cases from the fourth-century BCE impiety processes against Socrates and Phryne, to the clash between Greeks and Jews in first-century CE Alexandria (known as the first 'pogrom'), the Roman persecutions of Christians and the Christian 'destruction' of the Marneion in Late Antique Gaza. Along the way, he makes several methodological points, such as that classical Athens was reasonably tolerant (though there was always a chance of being accused of impiety), that the use of the term 'pogrom' for the events of 38 CE (or any other event in Antiquity) is misleading as it implies a purely religious conflict, that we see an increasing involvement of the state in exerting religious violence in the course of the Roman period, while in Late Antiquity bishops start to play a significant role as well, and finally that religious violence in Late Antiquity is mostly restricted to violent rhetoric. His concluding thesis can be taken as the motto for this book: 'in

Antiquity not all religious violence was that religious and not all religious violence that violent'.

Part II, on religious violence in the Graeco-Roman world, opens with Chapter 3 by Esther Eidinow on Greek religion. She focuses on the corpus of Greek binding spells (*katadesmoi*) from, mostly, Athens, dating to the late classical and Hellenistic period, and argues that these texts should be considered primarily as political instruments, which treated the body of the individual as a site of potential domination by imagining punishment of key body parts as happened in the civic law courts. The intention of the practitioners was not so much, she contends, to restrain their competitors, but rather to harm their opponents. To do this they employed the language and ideas of civic punishment, which in turn resulted in emotional relief. Thus Eidinow shows that the binding spells, far from being a marginal magical practice, were integrally linked to the institutions and values of the *polis*.

The Roman world is at the centre of the remaining chapters in this section. Chapter 4 by Christian R. Raschle starts with an overview of the ways in which foreign gods and cults were introduced (Asclepius and Cybele) and suppressed (Bacchus) at Rome in the Republican period. This general background sets the scene for his discussion of the repression of followers of the Isis cult and astrologers in late Republican and early imperial Rome (roughly first century BCE to first century CE). He shows that the violent actions against these groups are the result of a complex set of negotiations among elite members trying to convey messages of political identity by drawing boundaries between appropriate Roman and non-Roman behaviour.

With Chapter 5 by Steve Mason, we move on to two chapters on religious violence and the Jews. Mason starts out with some methodological reflections on the theme of the volume and uses these as a point of departure for a detailed analysis of two massacres, one of a Roman garrison in Jerusalem, the other of Jews in Caesarea, which according to Josephus occurred at the very same time on a Sabbath in 66 CE. He places the passage in its literary and historical context and concludes that we cannot be sure what real events lie behind Josephus' narrative. Moreover, according to Mason, Josephus knew no category of 'religion' in our sense of the word, hence we cannot speak here of (cases of) religious violence.

Chapter 6, by Andreas Bendlin, addresses head on the view of a Roman world before the mid-third century CE that, in sharp contrast to Late Antiquity, basically advocated tolerance and pluralism, thus minimising religious violence. Following the theoretical underpinnings of Kippenberg,

Bendlin invites us instead to disaggregate religion and violence, and acknowledge, contrary to what Mason holds, that social actors could appropriate the religious domain as they legitimised or suffered violence in the period in question. Moreover, different kinds of violence need to be distinguished – besides physical violence, also cultural and structural violence. He illustrates these points by a study of the Jewish diasporas of Flavian Rome and Puteoli (69–96 CE), highlighting the sustained cultural and structural violence to which these communities were exposed. Such violence was not restricted to the Jews, however, but also affected other diasporic communities.

The following three chapters deal with religious violence and the Christians, particularly the chapters by Rives and Manders, which are both concerned with the persecutions. In Chapter 7, James B. Rives incisively analyses the role of animal sacrifice in the Roman persecution of Christians in the second and third centuries CE. He argues that animal sacrifice appears to have played no distinctive role in the initial interactions between Christians and the Roman authorities, but that the edict of Decius (249/50 CE) marked a turning point not only in the emphasis that Roman authorities put on animal sacrifice, setting a precedent for later empire-wide persecutions, but also in the place of animal sacrifice in the Christian imagination, which now came to be seen more emphatically as a practice incompatible with Christian identity.

The last two chapters in this section, by Manders and Digeser, embody the transition from the Roman to the Late Antique period (note that Constantine occurs here first as emperor, in Manders' chapter, and then as Christian emperor, in that by Digeser). In Chapter 8, Erika Manders looks at the motives behind the outbreak of the Great Persecution (303–13 CE) from a new angle: the numismatic evidence. A quantitative analysis reveals that there were fewer different messages conveyed on the coin types of the Tetrarchs as compared with those of the previous, third-century emperors, and that they represent similar thematic patterns. The message of unification as evident from the coin types is taken as part of a larger ideological programme, which provided the context for the outbreak of the Persecution: with it the Tetrarchs intended to obtain greater (religious) unity in the empire.

Chapter 9, by Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, focuses on Constantine as a Christian warrior emperor. She argues that this image, which was diametrically opposed to the Christian image of the martyr, often persecuted by emperors, gained wide acceptance as a result of the rhetorical skills that Lactantius displayed in his *Divine Institutes*, probably written

between 306 and 310 CE. Digeser also suggests that the image as laid out by Lactantius resonated well with both Christian and non-Christian audiences in Gaul, pointing to the similarities with the depiction of Constantine as a divine warrior emperor in the panegyric delivered at Trier in 310 CE.

Part III deals with religious violence in Late Antiquity. The first two chapters serve as a further introduction to the chapters on Late Antiquity that comprise the remainder of the book. In Chapter 10 Wendy Mayer surveys the latest debates on religious violence in Late Antiquity, in which she distinguishes two major trends: the first is the problematisation of the term 'religious violence', including the question of whether the very notion of 'religion' as a category is applicable to (Late) Antiquity at all; the second is the call for a more methodologically sound approach to the sources, distinguishing clearly between rhetoric and reality, using (where possible) a variety of sources and studying religious violence on a case-by-case basis. Mayer closes with an outline of key issues to be addressed in future research.

Peter Van Nuffelen aims, in Chapter 11, to come to a better understanding of how coercion was conceptualised in Late Antiquity so as to overcome modern notions of intolerance. He illustrates this with the famous case of Augustine's dealing with the Donatists, in which the Church Father changed his stance by advocating the use of state coercion against them. This has been perceived in scholarship as a change from a tolerant to an intolerant attitude on Augustine's part. However, as Van Nuffelen shows, in Late Antiquity coercion is not the antinomy of persuasion; both categories rather belong to a single system of thought, going back to classical philosophy, in which persuasion is always attempted first and coercion is only applied when persuasion has failed. Thus Augustine's thinking is coherent and stays within the framework of late ancient ideas about persuasion and coercion, though at different points emphasising different elements.

In Chapter 12, Jitse H. F. Dijkstra studies one of the most famous cases of religious violence in Late Antiquity, the destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/92 CE. In order to properly understand how the events leading to the destruction unfolded, he takes recourse to social psychological models of crowd behaviour. After a brief overview of previous research on the destruction of the Serapeum, preferring the earliest Christian account (401/402 CE) by the Church historian Rufinus as the main source, he attempts a reconstruction of the course of events, dividing it into three phases. Among his conclusions are that other factors than religious ones

also played a role in the conflict, and that the 'destruction' of the Serapeum mostly constituted the end of its cults, which, however, clearly had a significant impact on religious life in the city.

The following two chapters are concerned with monastic literature. In the first of these, Chapter 13, Fabrizio Vecoli discusses the concept of violence in early monastic thought. How, he asks himself, can the – imagined or real – participation of monks in violent actions against others, as attested in contemporary sources, be reconciled with the image of renunciation of the world and inner peace espoused by the movement? In answer to this question he discusses the notion of violence in monastic theory, which is often connected to the exegesis of Matthew 11:12. He finds that in these writings the concept of violence is primarily aimed at the self (and demons) and is presented as paradoxical, even mystical: it embodies the ascetic practices that the monk has to go through and which he needs in order to attain rest. It is only when the notion is taken literally and applied to other people that it could be taken as a justification for physical violence against others.

Chapter 14 by Chris L. de Wet continues the theme of asceticism and violence by focusing on the *Historia religiosa* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, written in the 440s CE. De Wet argues that ascetic practice was an act of dominance of the soul over the body, exhibiting a punitive, purificatory and performative dimension, which was mostly targeted at the self but could also be extended to others. In this work, this is done through curses, which are described in terms of a violent 'asceticisation' of the other. He illustrates these points with ample examples from the text.

From monastic violence, we turn to intra-ecclesiastical violence with Christine Shepardson, who, in Chapter 15, draws our attention to narratives of violence in the fifth- and sixth-century anti-Chalcedonian Syrian authors John Rufus, Zachariah of Mytilene, Philoxenus of Mabbug, Severus of Antioch and John of Ephesus. These authors represented saints opposed to the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) as the most recent martyrs in a long tradition of Christians suffering from unjust imperial persecution. As Shepardson shows, they used this rhetorical scheme to build up a group identity and ensure the allegiance of their followers, adapting the scheme to the circumstances in which they were writing.

The concluding two chapters are concerned with Late Antique historiography. In Chapter 16 Hugh Elton takes a closer look at the revolt of the general Vitalian against the Emperor Anastasius in 513–15 CE, which is one of the few cases in Late Antique history in which disputes over Christianity, in this case the Council of Chalcedon, caused a civil war.

While analysing the various source traditions for the revolt and highlighting their significant differences, Elton shows how far the influence of imperial propaganda managers reached in the historiographical sources, which explains why the accounts of Marcellinus Comes and Theodore Lector leave out some of the events and portray Vitalian as a rebel rather than a Chalcedonian hero.

Geoffrey Greatrex rounds off the volume in Chapter 17. Starting from his well-known 1997 study of the Nika riot of 532 CE,[30] he now casts a wider net with a more general discussion of the dynamics of urban violence in the Eastern Roman empire, especially in Constantinople, during the fifth and sixth centuries. After a brief overview of research on this topic, emphasising the overlap between religious and factional violence, he argues that due to the rising influence of both the Church and the people, these centuries saw a significant weakening of the emperor's position. As a result, the emperor often had to succumb to the pressures of individuals and interest groups, which frequently involved the perpetration of violence.

As can be seen, the two trends in recent research on religious violence that Mayer mentions are reflected in the chapters gathered in this volume. There is a clear awareness of the problematic nature and complexity of the term (most explicitly in the chapters by Kippenberg, Bremmer, Mason, Bendlin, Rives, Mayer and Van Nuffelen) and the chapters use in-depth analyses of either specific cases (e.g. Mason, Dijkstra, Elton) or wider themes (e.g. Bendlin, Rives, Greatrex) to place violent events in their proper contexts. A major outcome of these studies is that they highlight the variety of forms that religious violence can and did take. If we concentrate on the question 'against whom was the violence directed?', the chapters by Vecoli and De Wet show that asceticism implied a strong violence against the self (and sometimes against others), then we have violence on the level of individual against individual, as in the curse tablets analysed by Eidinow, and finally violence by groups against other groups, such as the dominant group against certain professional groups and worshippers of foreign cults (Raschle), against migrants (Bendlin) and, more seriously, against the minority of the Christians (Bremmer, Rives, Manders), or, in Late Antiquity, against 'pagans', heretics and deviant Christian groups (e.g. Van Nuffelen, Dijkstra, Shepardson, Elton). The chapters also display the diversity of factors that are often involved in religious violence, in which especially political (e.g. Eidinow, Raschle, Elton) and socio-political factors (e.g. Dijkstra, Greatrex) come to the fore.

[30] G. Greatrex, 'The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal', *JHS* 117 (1997) 60–86.

In a diachronic view, the chapters confirm Bremmer's point concerning the increasing exertion of religious violence by the state in the Roman period. While actions against certain groups can be traced back to the Republic and continue into the imperial period (Raschle, Bendlin), the scale of the violence changed significantly with the edict of Decius in 249/50, culminating in the persecutions of 303–13 CE (Rives, Manders). For Late Antiquity, several examples of discursive (cultural) violence are provided (e.g. Digeser, De Wet, Shepardson). Together these chapters illustrate the complexity of the phenomenon as a richly diverse and multi-faceted aspect of the religious, political and cultural life of the ancient world across the Graeco-Roman and Late Antique periods. It is to be hoped that this volume will stimulate further scholarship on the topic along these lines in the years to come.

PART I

Methodology

CHAPTER 1

*Sacred Prefigurations of Violence: Religious Communities in Situations of Conflict**

Hans G. Kippenberg

Introduction: A Causal Relationship between Religion and Violence?

It was Jan Assmann, with his background in the history of ancient religion, who undertook to clarify the relationship between monotheism and violence.[1] He interpreted the remarkable link between Moses and Egypt in the Bible as the faded memory of a reform that was carried out by Pharaoh Akhenaten, who wanted to replace the Egyptian deities with the sun god Ra. Assmann drew a distinction between this exclusive monotheism, which disputed the right of all other gods to exist, and another type of belief in one god, 'cosmotheism', which postulated a cosmic ordering as the dwelling place of the gods and goddesses who were worshipped.[2] The attempt to permanently replace this type by an exclusive monotheism failed in Egypt; it succeeded only in Israel. The 'counter-religion' of Moses was the true religion, in contradistinction to the false worship of gods, and in Israel it was only through violent means that it could be enforced.

Assmann develops a line of thought that was first elaborated by David Hume in 1759: belief in God inevitably swings back and forth in history between polytheism and monotheism. Hume compared these two in sections 9–14 of his *Natural History of Religion*, with particular attention to their moral requirements. The two forms of religion are clearly distinct in terms of persecution of or tolerance towards those who believe

* Translation by Brian McNeil.

[1] J. Assmann, *Moses der Ägypter: Entzifferung einer Gedächtnisspur* (Munich, 1998).

[2] J. Assmann, 'Monotheismus und Kosmotheismus: Ägyptische Formen eines "Denkens des Einen" und ihre europäische Rezeptionsgeschichte', *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 1993, no. 2, 1–48 at 26. (n. 62) defines the term as follows: 'Unter "Kosmotheismus" verstehe ich ein auf der Übersetzung von der Göttlichkeit des Kosmos beruhendes Weltverständnis, das diese Göttlichkeit zunächst und natürlicherweise als Vielfalt erfährt, aber dabei die Einheit des Kosmos immer mitdenkt und sie schließlich sogar als das dominierende Prinzip ins Zentrum rücken kann'.

differently. When believers direct all their endeavours to obtaining the goodwill of their god, they will begin to persecute the adherents of other gods. This means that theism leads to intolerance and polytheism to tolerance.[3] The dynamics of the history of religions generates divergent moral and political norms.

Assmann, however, argues that the relevant biblical narratives of violent enforcement are not instances of violence that was actually practised. Rather, he proposes a 'mnemohistorical change of perspective': it shows how the enforcement was remembered.[4] The language of violence that is spoken by monotheism would be a 'semantic paradigm' that remained without consequences and did not issue a summons to violence.[5] Where acts of violence are attested in Judaism, they were directed inwards, towards apostate fellow believers. With these reflections, Assmann gave a long-lasting impetus to the debate about religion and violence. His claim is that religion (in this case, monotheism) generates religious violence against apostates. That his understanding is strongly influenced by a Christian notion of apostasy, and not covered by equivalent Jewish and Islamic concepts, will be addressed later.[6]

Nonetheless, the theme of monotheism and violence has been taken up by recent anti-religious polemicists, with the intention of establishing a necessary link between religion and violence. In the first years of the twenty-first century, under the impact of the Islamist attacks on the United States in 2001, a number of books have appeared that condemn religion as essentially violent. Richard Dawkins speaks of the 'God delusion'; Christopher Hitchens writes that religion is poisoning the world; Sam Harris declares that because of the terror generated by religion, religion is facing its end.[7]

Although this view has been propagated quite aggressively, recent empirical scientific studies take a different path. The paradigm that provides the framework for recent studies is no longer 'religious violence', but

[3] D. Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (London, 1757), in the edition by J. C. A. Gaskin, *David Hume: Principal Writings on Religion* (Oxford, 1993) 160–63. Cf. F. E. Manuel, *The Changing of the Gods* (Hanover, 1983) 63, who speaks of a psychological domino theory: fear of the gods became a mental suffering that generated aggression against those who believed differently. According to Manuel, Voltaire, who proffered similar ideas, counted no fewer than 9,468,800 victims of religious (Christian) zealots.

[4] J. Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich, 2003) 36, trans. in English as *The Price of Monotheism* (Stanford, 2009) 22.

[5] J. Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Vienna, 2006) 21–23.

[6] See below, pp. 29–30.

[7] R. Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London, 2006); C. Hitchens, *God Is Not Great* (New York, 2007); S. Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (New York, 2004).

'religion and violence'.[8] The cause of violence is not religion *per se*; acts of violence are generated by religious communities. In many instances religious communities interpret existing secular conflicts in religious terms, acting as what Jürgen Habermas calls 'communities of interpretation'.[9] We ourselves experience this in the public arena of our societies in questions of abortion, assisted suicide, reproductive medicine, animal protection, climate change, the use of weapons or aid to refugees. These are conflicts of varying kinds, which religious communities define and interpret in religious terms.

In his crucial essay 'Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie', Max Weber promotes the concept of 'social action' (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*):

> We shall speak of 'social action' wherever human action is subjectively related in *meaning* to the behavior of others . . . An important (though not indispensable) normal component of social action is its meaningful orientation to the *expectations* of certain behavior on the part of others and, in accordance with that, orientation to the (*subjectively*) assessed probabilities (*Chancen*) for the success of one's own action. A most understandable and important basis for the explanation of action therefore is the *objective* existence of these probabilities.[10]

Weber required this concept in order to explain the development of the great societal orderings and powers of economics, law, governance and religion out of the interactions of the agents and their concepts of meaning – instead of assuming their perennial existence. In the earlier part of his seminal work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, religion too is a category of social action that establishes a societal ordering and power of its own:

> To define 'religion', to say what it *is*, is not possible at the start of a presentation such as this. Definition can be attempted, if at all, only at the conclusion of the study . . . as we make it our task to study the conditions and effects of a particular type of social action. The external courses of religious behavior are so diverse that an understanding of this behavior can only be achieved from the viewpoint of . . . the religious

[8] M. Juergensmeyer, M. Kitts and M. Jerryson, 'The Enduring Relationship of Religion and Violence', in M. Juergensmeyer, M. Kitts and M. Jerryson (eds.), *Violence and the World's Religious Traditions: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2017) 1–6 at 3.

[9] J. Habermas, 'Die Revitalisierung der Weltreligionen: Herausforderung für ein säkulares Selbstverständnis der Moderne?', repr. in his *Philosophische Texte*, vol. 5 (Frankfurt, 2009) 387–407 at 392–93.

[10] M. Weber, 'Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie', repr. in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 7th ed. (Tübingen, 1988) 427–74 at 441–42; English trans. 'Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology', *Sociological Quarterly* 22 (1981) 151–80 at 159.

> behavior's 'meaning' (*Sinn*). The most elementary forms of behavior motivated by religious or magical factors are oriented to *this* world. 'That it may go well with thee . . . and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth (Deut. 4:40)'.[11]

An action is religious if it is oriented to subjective expectations of salvation. We are familiar with actions of this kind in the public arena of our societies. Even in secular societies, religious communities influence the formation of public opinion in political life.[12] And this is precisely what religious communities do in situations and regions affected by crisis. The view – supported by Dawkins, for example[13] – that Islamic terrorism is born from a love for the earliest Islam disturbs this link, for it erroneously supposes that the phenomenon emerged independently from the lengthy history of European and American interventions in Islamic countries. Instead of apodictically excluding this possibility, one ought to keep the situation of these countries in mind when one explains the genesis of Islamic terrorism.[14]

The communal character of the counter-violence can be seen above all in the language that a religious community applies: these are wars of a specific character (crusades, jihad, war on terror); the parties in the conflict are representing figures from the history of salvation and damnation; those who fall in the fight are martyrs; the country that is defended is described in terms of a sacral geography; the liberation of the country is its 'redemption'; and many other concepts are employed. This terminology does not express abstract affirmations of faith about salvation history; it is connected to the religious community's experiences of violence in modern and ancient times.

In what follows, I shall discuss the link between religious communities and violence with reference to 9/11 and the biblical zeal of Phinehas. I will look at these two cases against the background of the discussion of the Western concept of religion and action theory, especially the Thomas

[11] M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Teilband 2: Religiöse Gemeinschaften*, ed. H. G. Kippenberg with P. Schilm and the collaboration of J. Niemeier (Tübingen, 2001) 121; English trans. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968) 399–400.

[12] Habermas, 'Revitalisierung der Weltreligionen', 392–94.

[13] Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 343–44, approvingly quotes a journalist who says: 'The cause of all this misery, mayhem, violence, terror and ignorance is of course religion itself'. A similar position is taken by Harris, *End of Faith*, 134, who calls Muslim thought a tissue of myths and conspiracy theories. He states that there is no reason to assume that economic or political improvements could change this deplorable state of affairs.

[14] M. Lüders, *Wer den Wind sät: Was westliche Politik im Orient anrichtet* (Munich, 2015), and *Die den Sturm ernten: Wie der Westen Syrien ins Chaos stürzte* (Munich, 2017).

theorem, in order to clarify the links between religion and violence. The results of this investigation will be checked against the religious interpretation of the Middle East conflict. I conclude with methodological rules for the investigation of the link between religious communities and acts of violence.

A Contemporary Case of the Link between Religious Communities and Violence: The 9/11 Attack as a *Ghazwa* of Muhammad

Most of the studies of the attack on the United States on 11 September 2001 include the religious terminology of the Islamist fighters in their explanation of the attack and do not inquire into the secular reasons that the attackers and their leaders had – and voiced – for their action. The attack was perceived in the light of a liberal political discourse that was marked by the memory of the violence in Europe after the Reformation. Instead of understanding, condemnation ruled the day. The rhetoric of the notion of 'terrorist' suggested in addition that these people act violently as a result of their appraisal of violence and that they are morally nihilistic. Kapitan states:

> The rhetoric erases any incentive an audience might have to understand their point of view so that questions about the nature and origin of their grievances and the possibility [of] legitimacy of their demands will not even be raised. It thus deflects attention from the possibility that one's own politics may have contributed something to the genesis of their fury and their resistance.[15]

Brian Goldstone has shown the difficulties of such an approach in an article published in 2011. Can one really separate so unambiguously a category called 'religion' from a category called the 'secular' and from politics? Can one assert (as is so often done) that violence is inherent in religions and is more aggressive than the secular violence with which one fights against it in the 'war on terror'? Ought one not to investigate the place that 'religion' occupies in 'secularism' and to submit secularism itself to critical questioning? Can one distinguish modern from extremist religions, corrupt from authentic ones, and intolerant from tolerant ones, as many people attempt to do? As Goldstone demonstrates, all these options are found among scholars. His own response to them is negative, with the exception of Martha Nussbaum, who sees Samuel Huntington's so-called

[15] T. Kapitan, 'The Terrorism of "Terrorism"', in J. Sterba (ed.), *Terrorism and International Justice* (New York, 2003) 47–66 at 52.

'clash of civilisations' as taking place, not between two mutually alien civilisations (for instance, the West versus India or Islam), but within Western liberal culture itself, where some tolerate cultural diversity while others fight against it as a danger to societal and national unity. Once again, it is secularism that one must reflect on, if one is to understand the spectre of religious violence.[16]

William T. Cavanaugh has consolidated this view in an extensive study and further articles. In the course of the emergence of the European nation-state and its claim to a monopoly on the use of force, religions were depoliticised in the form of confessions. To the extent that they nevertheless remained political and emotional realities, they were assigned to the private sphere. Cavanaugh likewise explicitly rejects the view that religions are more prone to violence than secular ideologies such as National Socialism and Marxism. He sees the violence that the West practises against religious, and especially Islamist, movements as the consequence of a stereotype that has largely influenced the Western image of religion since Hobbes. The demand that religion should be free of politics and a purely private matter corresponds to the architecture of the Western nation-state, where a defining role was played by a process linked to the Reformation that led to an alliance between territorial state and confession. The German historians Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard have called this process 'confessionalisation'.[17] The formation of territorial powers in the context of the defence of the Protestants against the Catholic empire (and vice versa) was a process that left a long-lasting mark on both politics and religion. The early bureaucratic nation-state led to the formation of social relationships in sexuality, marriage, education, the care of the poor and control of violence. Accordingly, religious communities lose their political aspiration, have to abstain from any violence and become private. Religious violence is illegal and illegitimate, religion has to be depoliticised. The notion of religious violence is a construct of secular ideology, a 'secular myth', claiming for the state the monopoly of power.[18]

Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century and Carl Schmitt in the twentieth propagated the thesis that when religion is brought into the public domain, it causes civil wars and must therefore be kept in check by

[16] B. Goldstone, 'Secularism, "Religious Violence", and the Liberal Imaginary', in M. Dressler and A. S. Mandair (eds.), *Secularism and Religion-Making* (Oxford, 2011) 104–24.

[17] H. Schilling, 'Das konfessionelle Europa', in H. G. Kippenberg et al. (eds.), *Europäische Religionsgeschichte: Ein mehrfacher Pluralismus*, vol. 1 (Göttingen, 2009) 289–338.

[18] W. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford, 2009).

a strong state.[19] Against this line of thinking, which is even upheld until this day, two arguments can be brought in. First, we know today that religions can be, or become, public and their normative model of society allows them to take part in the political discourse of a society without conforming to existing circumstances but also without violently rejecting these circumstances. Violence does indeed occasionally occur (American Christians against abortion; Muslims against alcohol or sexually permissive films). Yet José Casanova's book *Public Religion* has presented empirical proof for the predominance of a non-violent rejection of social practices and the ability of religious communities to communicate their alternative social and cultural models peacefully to a broader public.[20]

Habermas takes a similar view. He understands religion as a picture that societies organised as states make of themselves. This includes legitimating ideas about law and governance that are based on myth and religion. When, in the Axial Age, in Israel, Greece and elsewhere the already existing social and political situation was confronted with transcendental concepts and ideas, religion acquired a fundamental independence of the existing situation and the order of the state.[21]

This allowed religious communities to influence European history with their values. The Hebrew Bible includes a societal constitution that God has prescribed for the chosen people, as a study by Eric Nelson has shown, and prescribed a republic, not a monarchy; it was the task of the legitimate state to achieve an egalitarian distribution of landed property and the state had to acknowledge religious diversity.[22] Jewish monotheism was from the outset a comprehensive political promise of freedom and liberation linked to fidelity to God, which generated the biblical obligation to put a time limit to the enslavement for debts of members of one's faith and the seizure of their landed property. This promise never became obsolete. Slaves in the United States were likewise guided by it when they yearned for freedom, as Michael Walzer writes in his book *Exodus*, in which he describes the Exodus narrative as the prototype of the course taken by revolutions in

[19] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civill* (London, 1651); C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1963) 79–95.

[20] J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, 1994).

[21] J. Habermas, '"The Political": The Rational Meaning of a Questionable Inheritance of Political Theology', in E. Mendieta and J. VanAntwerpen (eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York, 2011) 15–33; on the Axial Age, see R. N. Bellah and H. Joas (eds.), *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

[22] E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

the twentieth century.[23] If the Promised Land is to be reached, one must part company with all the present-day comforts and accept deprivations.

The insight that religious communities can give a religious interpretation of existing secular circumstances and act as 'communities of interpretation' is central to the explanation of the 9/11 attack on the United States.[24] Most scholars have seen the attacks as causally generated by a special variant of Islam, namely militant Islamism or Jihadism. The preceding declaration of war by Osama bin Laden and other jihadist groups is usually ignored in these analyses. In 1998, Bin Laden issued a summons of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders, which was also signed by Egyptian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi jihadists. The first part of this declaration is a justification of the jihad and the attack on the United States. It affirmed that a war against Muslims was taking place. The United States had occupied the most sacred Islamic places in the Arabian Peninsula in order to steal natural resources, humiliate Muslims and suppress Muslim peoples. Through their embargo (after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990), the United States had inflicted heavy damage on the Iraqi people. The United States was destroying Iraq and wanted to dissolve the states in the region into defenceless mini-states in order to guarantee the superiority of Israel.[25]

The declaration of war is justified by referring to economic, political and military aggression by the United States and Israel, which non-Muslim observers of Western interventions in the Near and Middle East also evaluate negatively.[26] However, the declaration presents the resistance against these events not from the perspective of governments and states in the Near East but from that of Muslims in general, who have altogether experienced humiliations and degradations through the interventions of the United States and Israel. Among the many studies of 9/11, it is especially Jessica Stern who sees here the real motivating factor for the violence.[27] Unlike the authors of other studies of the 9/11 terror, she seeks to understand the phenomenon without sympathising with it. This corresponds largely to Weber's method of making social action comprehensible before one judges its value. To do so, one must identify the meaning that the agents attribute to their action. Although Stern flatly describes the

[23] M. Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York, 1986). [24] See above, p. 19.
[25] B. Lawrence, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (London, 2005) 60.
[26] E.g. Lüders, *Wer den Wind sät*, 23–36.
[27] J. Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York, 2003) 32–62.

attack as pure evil, she does not believe it to be incomprehensible.[28] She mentions matters that are ignored in other studies of terrorism, often out of deference to Israel, and gives a detailed description of the humiliation of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. All Muslims share this experience, not only those who live in one specific region. The perspective is that of a global community of Muslims (*umma*).

The second part of Bin Laden's declaration draws from the 'humiliation' the conclusion that the United States has declared war on God, so that the strengthening of Islam is now the highest obligation of all believers. This takes on the form of a binding legal verdict (*hukm*) providing the events with a religious framework of reference that justifies extreme violence against Americans and Jews:

> To kill the Americans and their allies – civilian and military – is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim in all countries, in order to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Mosque [in Mecca] from their grip, so that their armies leave all the territory of Islam, defeated, broken, and unable to threaten any Muslim.[29]

Finally, the declaration exhorts the Muslims, in view of the inevitability of war, not to be attached to their lives. Do they really want to prefer life in this world to life in the world to come? Salvation is at stake.

Young believing Muslims did in fact carry out the attack on 11 September as if it were a *ghazwa*, just as Muhammad had once carried out a military expedition against the opponents of the societal order that he had founded in Medina. They performed their action in agreement with a *Spiritual Manual* of four pages in Arabic, later found in the luggage of Mohammed Atta and the car of another perpetrator. The *Manual* divided the action into three parts. The night before the attack, the perpetrators had to renew their 'intention' (*niyya*). Since suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam, the perpetrators must turn into warriors on the path of God. The men have to purify their bodies and prepare themselves for the action step by step, through recitations, prayers, meditations and ritual ablutions. The Arabic word for 'recitation', *dhikr*, which is used frequently in the *Manual*, never means only 'reciting a text'. It always also means 'remembering' and 'representing'. The recitation enables one to participate today in the past supernatural power of the Prophet. The fighters are to recite *sura* 8 and 9 and to reflect on what they mean. The Prophet himself commanded that these *sura* should be recited before the raid (*ghazwa*), with the result that

[28] Ibid., xxii. [29] Lawrence, *Messages to the World*, 61.

they captured much booty. The choice of *sura* 8, 'The Spoils', and 9, 'The Repentance', is significant, since both come from the period when Muhammad left Mecca and founded a state in Medina, and then went to war against Mecca. The principal example that provided a model for the perpetrators' action was the Battle of the Trench in 627 CE, which was fought against both external and internal foes. When the author of the *Manual* puts this frame around the hijacking, he is imitating early Islamic battles, even down to actions that are out of place, such as the plundering of the foes. The success of the operation depends on the correct recitation of *sura* and the precise re-enactment of the attack: it is these that guarantee the purity of the intention and the success of the operation.[30]

The examination of 9/11 shows that Muslims first declared war on the United States because of the continuous American political, social, economic and religious intervention in Muslim states, before, three years later, young Muslims performed the attack as a *ghazwa* staging Muhammad's violent defence of Medina against its enemies. The attack of 9/11 was instrumental in attacking the enemy of God and performed violence in accordance with a historical example. The action is an expression, not of a perennially warring Islam, but of a present situation that Muslims defined in terms of a sacred prefiguration.[31]

The outstanding explanation of the attacks by the perpetrators is the 'humiliation' that Muslims had experienced. There is a farewell video of one of the attackers, Ahmad al-Haznawi al-Ghamidi, which was later broadcast by al-Jazeera. In this video he explains that he and the others wanted to die as martyrs:

> The time of humiliation and slavery is over. It is time to kill the Americans in their own backyard, among their sons, and near their forces and intelligence ... The United States is nothing but propaganda ... O Allah, revive an entire nation by our deaths ... accept me as a martyr.[32]

The political chief of Hamas explained to Mark Juergensmeyer the logic of this way of thinking and acting:

[30] H. G. Kippenberg and T. Seidensticker (eds.), *The 9/11 Handbook: Annotated Translation and Interpretation of the Attackers' Spiritual Manual* (London, 2006); H. G. Kippenberg, 'Religious Foundations of the Last Instructions of 9/11' (2016), in J. Barton (ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford), pp. 1–33, available online at http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-83.

[31] For the term 'prefiguration', see p. 33 below.

[32] B. Rubin and J. C. Rubin, *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East: A Documentary Reader* (Oxford, 2002) 276.

> He went on to say that, in his view, the very nature of Islam is about the defense of 'dignity, land, and honor'. [According to the Prophet] dishonoring someone is the worst act that one can do, and the only thing that can counter it is dignity: the honor provided by religion and courage of being a defender of the faith. In a curious way, then, both religion and violence were seen as antidotes to humiliation.[33]

The violence is justified by the humiliation of the Muslims, whose honour and dignity the suicide attackers restore through their actions.[34] The Islamic community is so weak because its adherents have neglected their obligation to jihad and other Islamic prescriptions, such as the prohibition of usury. The community will regain its strength only when the tables are turned on the unbelievers and they are violently subdued by the jihadists.

In more than one hundred martyr videos that were disseminated by al-Sahab, the media department of al-Qaeda, we find this justification of attacks in a whole variety of conflict regions: Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Syria, Kashmir, Chechnya and Palestine. Instead of the usual names for these territories, the videos speak of 'Khorasan' instead of Afghanistan and of the 'Land of the Two Rivers' instead of Iraq; we hear of the 'Levant' instead of Syria, and of the 'Maghreb' instead of North Africa. The videos presuppose a sacral geography, not the nation-state.[35] The suicide attacker shatters the arrogance and hubris of the Western enemies, thereby restoring to the original *umma* the strength and dignity that are its own, as is described in *sura* 3:110:

> You are the best community brought forth for the people. You enjoin what is reputable and you forbid the disreputable and you believe in God. Had the people of the Scripture believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are believers, but most of them are profligate.[36]

The violent actions by Muslims are a reaction to the humiliation of their community, which, however, is itself not without guilt, since it has abandoned jihad in the way of God and practised forbidden deeds. The humiliation is a punishment by God for its failure.[37] Only the martyrs

[33] M. Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Berkeley, 2017) 231.

[34] On the 'humiliation' and Western 'arrogance', see F. Khosrokhavar, *Les nouveaux martyrs d'Allah*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 2003) 238–39.

[35] P. Nanninga, *Jihadism and Suicide Attacks, al-Qaeda, al-Sahab and the Meanings of Martyrdom* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Groningen, 2014) 140, with an appendix on 'Al-Sahab's Martyrdom Videos' and a CD-ROM containing the videos.

[36] Trans. A. Jones, *The Qurʾān* (Cambridge, 2007) 76.

[37] Nanninga, *Jihadism and Suicide Attacks*, CD-ROM, English texts, nos. 16, 38.

have woken up during the occupation of the Islamic lands and are able to lift the *umma* from humiliation and weakness.[38]

The summons of the Islamic World Front is addressed to the community of Muslims, independently of national borders, nations, languages and regions. They must all share the experience of injustice and aggression that is the fate of their fellow believers who live in conflict regions, and they must use violence to restore the dignity of the Islamic community. The fact that the authors disseminate via electronic media the lament about the humiliations and summons to violence means that ethnic, political or linguistic loyalties among Muslims move into the background: Islam becomes the primary bond that unites them all.[39] It is the entire community of Muslims that are affected by these humiliations. Only the communities of Sunni and Shia Islam remain separate, although the Shiites too employ this argument in situations and regions of crisis. Muslims in these crisis regions define the situation of their community as 'humiliations' and infer from this a justification of their acts of violence.

Stern points to another matter in addition to the grievances, namely the organisational power of the leaders, who are capable of organising a war of this kind. In the second part of her book, she describes the characteristics of the 'Holy War Organisations'. There are not only individual perpetrators but also inspiring leaders and their adherents, commanders and their squads, networks, franchises, volunteers and sponsors. All of these help to generalise the experience of the brethren in the Middle East and the other regions concerned.[40]

The conclusion that should be drawn from this case is that we need, on the one hand, both a description and an explanation of the conflict in terms of sociology and cultural science, and on the other hand, a thick description of the religious performance of the act of violence. These two scholarly operations are essential to be able to sufficiently explain the link between religion and violence. Cases of religious violence such as 9/11 must be studied from two perspectives. In the first place, it is an instrumental act, a means to define, resolve and overcome a conflict in which the religious community of Muslims is involved and which is couched in religious notions. Second, it is a religious act, an exercise (performance) of violence in accordance with models of the religious tradition that are being

[38] Ibid., CD-ROM, English texts, no. 49.
[39] D. F. Eickelman, '"Muslim Ties That Bind": New Media, Belonging, and "Home" in the Network Society', in G. Larsson (ed.), *Religious Communities on the Internet: Proceedings from a Conference* (Uppsala, 2006) 47–61.
[40] Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 139–280.

actualised. Both are independent aspects of one and the same action.[41] They are not connected inherently but only by the actor quoting the performative model as justifying the fight against the enemies of the Islamic order. The appropriate sociological model for conceiving the actions of the resistance fighters is the Thomas theorem (acting according to the definition of a situation), not a fixed timeless value of jihad.[42] The link between the sacred prefiguration of the jihadists and the conflict is contingent but both shape each other: a secular conflict is defined as sacred; a religious resistance is enacted as political. The contingency is twofold.

An Ancient Case of the Link between Religious Communities and Violence: The Violent Zeal of Phinehas for the Observation of God's Covenant with Israel

We can test this model of the religious definition of a situation and the resulting violent action in Antiquity by means of a biblical narrative of violence that acquired an eminently exemplary function: the zeal of Phinehas. The Book of Numbers relates with disgust how the Israelites with whom God has made a covenant have sexual relations with foreign women and worship Ba'al. The Israelite Zimri even takes a Midianite woman into his tent before the eyes of Moses and the entire community. Phinehas then goes after them and spears them both in the tent. By this deed, not only does Phinehas make atonement for the Israelites; God also praises him for his zeal and awards him eternal priesthood.[43]

Assmann correctly remarks that the principal enemy in this narrative is the apostate, not the foreign unbeliever. But he neglects to take proper account of the specific understanding of apostasy in Judaism. Here, as in Islam, the meaning of apostasy is different from that in Christianity: it is not about a wrong doctrine but about deserting one's religious community and its commitments. A similar observation can be made about blasphemy. A closer look by Talal Asad reveals that it is not about incorrect religious belief. A Muslim may hold reprehensible opinions about matters of faith in private. It is about the public expression of opinions or actions that destroy a living relationship with the community.[44] The same holds for Judaism.

[41] I have employed this dual approach to a number of contemporary cases in H. G. Kippenberg, *Violence as Worship: Religious Wars in the Age of Globalization* (Stanford, 2011).

[42] On the Thomas theorem, see in more detail below, pp. 35–38.

[43] Numbers 25.

[44] T. Asad, 'Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism', in T. Asad et al., *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (Berkeley, 2009) 20–63 at 36–46.

Hence one cannot say with Assmann that violence that went beyond a fight against apostasy would have arisen only at a later date, as the result of political manipulation. He asserts in the conclusion to *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*:

> The semantic dynamite that is present in the sacred texts of the monotheistic religions ignites, not in the hands of the believers, but in the hands of the fundamentalists who are interested in political power and who make use of the religious motifs of violence in order to swing the masses behind them.[45]

The biblical narrative states that God's wrath against Israel was appeased only by the death of the apostate. However, what is at the centre of this story is not the punishment of an unbelieving Israelite individual but the action of Phinehas and God's election of him and his descendants to an everlasting priesthood. The consequences of his zeal ensured for the community an end to God's wrath, and thereby salvation. The relation to the community is inherent to the story from the very beginning.

The political history after establishing a Jewish political community in the Persian period shaped the meaning of the narrative. After Judaea was detached from the province of Samaria in the fifth century BCE under Nehemiah, the religious community in Judaea became an autonomous political association, with Jerusalem as its centre, and enforced the socio-political and cultic demands of Deuteronomy in the new society. According to Nehemiah 10:31–40, all the Israelites bound themselves by an oath to live according to the law of God, beginning with a prohibition of marriage to foreigners.

Frank Crüsemann has called this document one of the oldest expositions of the Torah. It combines cultic laws concerning the priests with the social regulations of the Book of the Covenant and Deuteronomy. The combination was promoted by an alliance between over-indebted farmers and priests. This coalition joined the self-commitment to the remission of debts and the liberation of slaves to the prescriptions about provisions for the Temple.[46] The Torah is an instruction for both the priests and the people. The election of all Israel as the people of God made the lasting enslavement of one's brothers and sisters in faith unacceptable.[47]

[45] Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*, 57; trans. ours from the German.

[46] F. Crüsemann, *Die Tora: Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes* (Munich, 1992) 394–98.

[47] On the ancient Jewish religious community as a bearer of political order, see H. G. Kippenberg, *Die vorderasiatischen Erlösungsreligionen in ihrem Zusammenhang mit der antiken Stadtherrschaft*

A religious community developed into a legal association that later, under Greek rule, bore the designation *politeuma* (the association of citizens of an autonomous city). But whereas in the Hellenistic states the owners of the land largely entrusted agricultural work to slaves and only the so-called tyrants in special situations decreed the liberation of slaves, the remission of debts and the redistribution of the land, matters were different in the Jewish political community of citizens. The farmers were also the owners of the land and had the full rights of citizens, including a temporal limit – after six years, in the Sabbath year – on a loss of freedom that might have been incurred through debt.[48] This created a tension between the ethics of brotherliness and the dominant Hellenistic urban culture. According to Weber, the Jewish religious community had taken over the emergency assistance that was practised in the old pre-state neighbourhood association and made it into a religious commandment, which established its independence from the system of the Hellenistic cities:

> Out of all this grows the injunction of brotherly love, which is especially characteristic of congregational religion, in most cases because it contributes very effectively to the emancipation from political organization.[49]

The actualisation of the cultic and social demands in the time of Nehemiah made it possible for the Phinehas narrative to become a model of the preservation of the people's holiness in situations in which the internal ordering of the community was under threat. This was the case in the Maccabean revolt, which is why the opposition to the Hellenisation of the political powers came not only from priests but also from laymen. The religious community defended its internal order.

In the situation of conflict between the Hellenistic political powers and the religious community of people and priests, Phinehas' zeal was chosen as an appropriate model for action. In the Jewish revolt against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV in the second century BCE, the narrative of Phinehas played a key role in the sequence of events. The priest Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabaeus, saw a Jewish fellow citizen who wanted to sacrifice to Olympian Zeus according to the order of the Greek ruler:

(Frankfurt, 1991) 119–78; on the 'document of self-obligation', pp. 128–31; on the holiness of the entire community, see Crüsemann, *Tora*, 413–19.

[48] M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York, 1971) 136–47; Kippenberg, *Vorderasiatische Erlösungsreligionen*, 138–57.

[49] Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Teilband 2: Religiöse Gemeinschaften*, 372; trans. Weber, *Economy and Society* 1, 580, on which see in more detail H. G. Kippenberg, 'Webers Konzeption von Brüderlichkeitsethik und die Macht religiöser Vergemeinschaftung', in A. Bienfait (ed.), *Religionen verstehen: Zur Aktualität von Max Webers Religionssoziologie* (Wiesbaden, 2011) 92–122.

> When Mattathias saw it, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred. He gave vent to righteous anger; he ran and killed him on the altar. At the same time he killed the king's officer who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. Thus he burned with zeal for the law, just as Phinehas did against Zimri son of Salu. Then Mattathias cried out in the town [Modein] with a loud voice, saying: 'Let everyone who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!' Then he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the town.[50]

In his study of the Zealots, Martin Hengel maintains that one of the great movements in the war against Rome in 66–70 CE took this name because there existed a religious-political party that went back to the Maccabees. Other scholars have rejected this idea, which is born of the constraints of a model prescribing the cultural stability of tradition.[51] There are, however, better explanations. Stephen Greenblatt has abandoned the rigid framework of cultural stability and opened up the way for new interpretations of the manner in which such sacred narratives were appropriated. An older narrative can become an exemplary model in a new situation. When, for example, Moses is understood as a prefiguration of Christ, he retains his place in Jewish history but his meaning changes through his actualisation in the figure of Christ. He becomes a '*figura*'. The concept of '*figura*' indicates not the stability of traditional meaning but the newness that it acquires through a fusion of continued existence and innovation.[52]

This is how the interpretative pattern of Phinehas' zeal continued to exist. The early Christians venerated the Maccabees and ensured the literary transmission of 1 and 2 Maccabees in the framework of the Septuagint. Like the Maccabees, Christians in Late Antiquity too were fighting for the purity of their community, the Church.[53] During the Crusades, Christians took this sacred scheme as their model when they

[50] 1 Maccabees 2:24–28; translations of the Bible here and elsewhere in this paper are from NRSV.

[51] M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n.Chr.* (Leiden, 1961) 61–78, cf. pp. 151–234. The assumption of a 'Zealot' party has been refuted e.g. by R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis, 1987) 121–29; see also I. Wandrey, 'Zeloten', in *RGG*^{4} VIII (2005) 1832–34 at 1832.

[52] S. Greenblatt, 'Cultural Mobility: An Introduction', in S. Greenblatt et al. (eds.), *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2010) 1–23 at 12–15.

[53] T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009) explains the militancy not only of Christians in Late Antiquity, but also of Muslims, in terms of a violent defence of the identity of their religious communities. Cf. the reference to Phinehas in the story of the death of Arius in the *Historia religiosa* of Theodoret, as discussed by De Wet, this volume, pp. 339–40.

summoned men to fight for their cause.[54] In the privilege that he granted the Templers, the Pope motivated them by calling them the *milites Templi* of Jerusalem, the new Maccabees in the age of grace, who had denied their desires for worldly matters, had abandoned their possessions, had taken up their cross and followed Christ. He told them that it was through them that God was liberating the Church in the East from being sullied by the unbelievers and was expelling the enemies of Christendom.[55] Thus we can see how a sacred narrative could become a model in new situations. The comparison with the Maccabees is not based simply on an uninterrupted continuity or on invention. It is an example of what Greenblatt calls 'cultural mobility'.[56]

In a study of political myths, published posthumously in 1996, Hans Blumenberg has defined more precisely what is expected of the imitation of a narrative of this kind.[57] He coins the concept of 'prefiguration' independently of Greenblatt, though the latter's concept of '*figura*' is similar. A narrative like that of the Maccabees, who defended the divine order with the zeal of Phinehas and were rewarded with the martyrs' crown, could become an exemplary action again, when the agents wanted to be certain in their coping with a conflict. An event in the past becomes a metaphor that guides their conduct, since it was successful. The narrative is linked with the expectation of an identical outcome. The violent punishment of the traitor to the covenant with God brings salvation to the perpetrator and his community. The concept of 'prefiguration' does not refer to a transcendental value but provides orientation for action in a situation of conflict. Staging sacred violent models in situations of conflict guarantees salvation to the agent and his religious community.

The Maccabees and later resistance groups created an effective paradigm of mobilising biblical narratives against a common enemy. The narrative was understood as an exemplary salvific action for the present day. In the handbook *Religion and Violence*, Juergensmeyer has spoken of 'performance violence' and has drawn attention to a further element. When

[54] C. Auffarth, 'Die Makkabäer als Modell der Kreuzfahrer: Usurpationen und Brüche in der Tradition eines jüdischen Heiligenideals', in C. Elsas (ed.), *Tradition und Translation: Zum Problem der interkulturellen Übersetzbarkeit religiöser Phänomene* (Berlin, 1994) 362–90, *Irdische Wege und himmlischer Lohn: Kreuzzug, Jerusalem und Fegefeuer in religionswissenschaftlicher Perspektive* (Göttingen, 2002) 123–50, and 'Heilsame Gewalt? Darstellung, Begründung und Kritik der Gewalt in den Kreuzzügen', in M. Braun and C. Herberichs (eds.), *Gewalt im Mittelalter: Realitäten – Imaginationen* (Munich, 2005) 251–72.

[55] Auffarth, 'Makkabäer', 368–69.

[56] Greenblatt, 'Cultural Mobility'.

[57] H. Blumenberg, *Präfiguration: Arbeit am politischen Mythos*, ed. A. Nicholls and F. Heidenreich (Berlin, 2014) 9–15.

violent actions are carried out publicly in the form of a scheme that can be interpreted in religious terms, there is an interchange between the traditional scheme and the understanding that the public has of what a situation means.[58] This happened in the Jewish War against Rome. Infringement of the covenant with God led to a loss of freedom and disaster, but fidelity to his covenant ensured prosperity for the people and 'zealots'. The common good that the rebels brought to their people in the struggle against the foreign rule by the Greeks and Romans was the freedom of Zion (*herut zion*) or the re-establishment of Zion (*geulat zion*) or the Holy Jerusalem, as we read on the coins from the time of the war.[59] The new calendar followed the rhythm of the Sabbath year.

In connection with the zeal of Mattathias and his sons, the idea of martyrdom emerged in ancient Judaism. The leader of the revolt, Judas Maccabaeus, a son of Mattathias, summoned his Jewish fellow citizens to fight for their ancestral laws, even if this meant death.[60] Similar notions were cultivated in communities of Greek citizens, where it was regarded as honourable to die for one's native town and ancestral laws.[61] The fight of the martyr was conceived as the political fight for the ancestral laws, though these were given by God and the reward far beyond political reputation.[62] One of the Jewish martyrs confessed openly before the ruler: 'We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors'.[63] The martyr dared to engage in a struggle against the powers of this world before the end of time by openly confessing his faith before the godless powers of this world and by accepting death for doing so. He was certain of the 'resurrection to life'.[64] The meaning of the Phinehas narrative changed when conceived as a fight for the right constitution of Israel, as the meaning of the Greek *patrioi nomoi* ('ancestral laws') changed when applied to the Jewish community.[65] The interaction between both yields a double contingency: the Jewish notion turns political, the Greek one religious.

[58] M. Juergensmeyer, 'Religious Terrorism as Performance Violence', in M. Jerryson, M. Juergensmeyer and M. Kitts (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence* (Oxford, 2013) 280–92.

[59] H. G. Kippenberg, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa: Eine religionssoziologische Studie zum Verhältnis von Tradition und gesellschaftlicher Entwicklung*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1982) 164–65.

[60] 2 Maccabees 8:21, 13:14.

[61] Kippenberg, *Vorderasiatische Erlösungsreligionen*, 208–09.

[62] On the Greek background of the Jewish concept, see J. W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Leiden, 1997) 187–269.

[63] 2 Maccabees 7:2; cf. 7:37.

[64] 2 Maccabees 7:14; cf. 7:9 and Daniel 12:2.

[65] H. G. Kippenberg, 'Die jüdischen Überlieferungen als "patrioi nomoi"', in R. Faber and R. Schlesier (eds.), *Die Restauration der Götter: Antike Religion und Neo-Paganismus* (Würzburg, 1986) 45–60.

The effect of this prefiguration can be seen even in the murder of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, when he was willing, in the so-called Oslo peace process, to give back to the Palestinians occupied territory that God had allegedly promised the Jews in the Bible. A script for action in the present day was deduced from the biblical promise to Abraham:

> Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'.[66]

The assailant – Yigal Amir, a Talmudic student at Bar Ilan University – regarded Rabin's actions as a betrayal of the covenant with God and shot him at a peace rally on 4 November 1995.[67] When Amir was interrogated by the state investigating officers after his arrest, he said that he had not been authorised to do this deed by any rabbi – though rabbis certainly advanced justifications for the deed – but was solely motivated by his study of the biblical models of Phinehas and Jael.[68] Thus the story of Phinehas inspired the young perpetrator.[69]

The Thomas Theorem

Does this mean, then, that the Jewish, Christian or Islamic religions are violent? If one applies the means-and-ends pattern to the relationship between values and action, the members of a religious community ought to act in accordance with its values. The scientific study of religion has understood this to mean that one can draw inferences from the prescribed ordinary practices of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus or Buddhists about their values. In this way, openness to other cults became the value

[66] Genesis 12:1–3.

[67] M. Karpin and I. Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin* (London, 1998).

[68] On Jael, see Judges 4:17–24. On the interrogation of Amir and the classified minutes, see E. Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York, 1999) 280–81, with nn. 73, 77.

[69] Cf. ibid., 102: 'hot-blooded *haredi* [ultraorthodox] youngsters often see themselves and are perceived by the community as zealots. When they throw rocks at secular drivers, burn sanitation trucks, or brutally attack policemen and archaeologists, they rarely act with rabbinical authorization. Legitimacy comes via the great tradition of Pinchas'.

of inclusivism in Hinduism,[70] the renunciation of violence (*ahimsa*) became typical of Buddhism and the precept of neighbourly love a characteristic trait of Christianity. These simplifications are disputed today, both empirically and theoretically. Empirically, because the examination of the great religious traditions has discovered in all of them violence carried out in their name. This means that one cannot describe the value of religions as either violent or peaceful. Consequently, as we have seen in the introduction, the term 'religion and violence' has replaced 'religious violence'.[71] The methods of investigation have become more differentiated. Even communities which preach that their believers must practise tolerance, renounce violence or love their neighbour if they are to attain salvation, in the course of their history have known situations in which their very existence was threatened. They defended themselves violently, contrary to the values that they preached to their believers.

The inspection of the history of any religious community does not lead to one single value that determines the behaviour of its adherents but rather to a plurality of values. In the analysis of action in general, the Thomas theorem has today replaced Parsons' means-and-ends scheme: the value as the end of action, action as the means of a value.[72] One cannot infer from the values that one ascertains by questioning people that they will act in accordance with these values. Action is not the consequence of attitudes that are presupposed. It is only the definition of the situation by the agent that determines the action. The teleological model that Parsons makes the principle of his 'structure of social action' is, however, based on a precedence of intention over action. Like Hartmut Esser, Hans Joas too energetically disputes such a precedence: the intention of an action does not exist before the action itself, but comes into existence in the situation out of a reflection on the aspirations that are at work in one's own action and that of others.[73] This means that the subjective practical attitude is adopted only in the face of the external conditions of a situation. There are no values, only evaluations, argues Andreas Urs Sommer.[74]

[70] G. Oberhammer (ed.), *Inklusivismus: Eine indische Denkform* (Vienna, 1983). The volume includes, at pp. 11–28, the posthumous publication of the paper 'Inklusivismus' by P. Hacker originally delivered in 1977. The rest of the volume is a critical discussion of Hacker's concept.

[71] See above, pp. 18–19.

[72] H. Joas, *Die Kreativität des Handelns* (Frankfurt, 1996) 235. The Thomas theorem stems from the conclusion of the study by W. I. Thomas and D. S. Thomas, *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs* (New York, 1928) 572: 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'.

[73] Joas, *Kreativität des Handelns*, 232.

[74] A. U. Sommer, *Werte: Warum man sie braucht, obwohl es sie nicht gibt* (Stuttgart, 2016).

When one investigates the behaviour of religious collectives from this perspective, it is the sacred prefigurations that are employed for the definition of a situation – not abstract values. The prefigurations integrate one's own action into the salvation history of the community. This is why scientists of religion do well not to assume causality between religious beliefs and actions. Rather, one must investigate the situation and the available prefigurations in order to understand why people have chosen this particular prefiguration, and not another one, in their action.

At the end of his essay on 'the definition of the situation', Hartmut Esser takes into account both the subjective aspect of the definition of a situation and the external circumstances:

> The internal selection of the models of the situation . . . does not take place in empty air. It is done against the background of *faits sociaux* that are immovable, although they in turn are constructed societally . . . People undoubtedly define their own situation themselves but they do not do so of their own volition. They do so in . . . circumstances that are immediately taking place.[75]

The particular feature of the situation is defined by the agents in religious terms; the meaning of their actions depends on the specific definition of the situation. They select as their programme of action the sacred prefiguration that covers their definition of the present situation. We observe a double contingency: the type of secular conflict is defined in religious terms and the manner of emulating a sacred paradigm is related to present political circumstances. When one acts, one can bear in mind or else ignore responsibility for the consequences – in Weber's terms, an ethics of responsibility and an ethics of conviction are further modes of acting.[76]

Routine often dispenses the agents from the necessity to make a definition of their own. However, when the plausibility of one particular definition and belief in the success of the action disappear (for example, when expectations are disappointed), the agents can suddenly become aware that they have still other possibilities of defining the situation in which they find themselves, and then switch from an 'automatic' to a 'reflexive' mode. It is at this point that the availability of different models of action comes into play. Esser speaks here of 'framing: the selection of the frame of reference'.[77] When agents choose a definition, they rely on

[75] H. Esser, 'Die Definition der Situation', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 48 (1996) 1–34 at 32; trans. ours.
[76] H. Esser, *Soziologie: Spezielle Grundlagen*, vol. 6 (Frankfurt, 2001) 326–27.
[77] Ibid., 259–334; trans. ours.

recognised sacred patterns, and select one as binding. To take the example of the previously mentioned revolt of the Maccabees against Greek rule, the framing takes place in agreement with a belief in the exemplary zeal of Phinehas for the purity of the Jewish community established in the covenant with God. By referring to this exemplary deed, the actor declares that he defines the situation as one in which the purity of the entire community is at stake.

But an interpretation of this kind does not necessarily always lead to revolt. For example, the founders of the Qumran community, the Essenes, separated themselves from the Maccabees without violence: 'At that time many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to live there'.[78] The Essenes understood themselves to be the holy remnant of Israel. They hoped that through their fidelity to this covenant, they would be spared from the impending catastrophes of the end time.[79] Their values were no less rooted in the traditional Jewish religion than the values of the militant activists, but in terms of the ensuing action they defined fidelity to the covenant differently.

Jewish and Muslim Definitions of the Middle East Conflict

The course taken by religious communities that in modern times ran into conflict with threatening powers confirms the analysis of the ancient case, and vice versa. The ancient and modern cases both show a communal religion defining a threat to its existence and violently defending its community by emulating a sacred deed that, according to its tradition, once saved it from godless powers: Phinehas' zeal, Muhammad's *ghazwa*. The same applies to the modern conflict in the Middle East, which, however, manifests one further element in the link between religion and violence: the emergence of religious communities as political actors. We will first look at Jewish definitions of the situation and then to the ones that Muslims adduce for the same situation.

To start with the Jews, a script for action that we can trace down to the present day, already mentioned above in the discussion of the murder of Rabin, comes from God's promise to Abraham and his descendants.[80] The so-called ultraorthodox Jews of the twentieth century believed that the

[78] 1 Maccabees 2:29.

[79] J. Kampen, *The Hasideans and the Origin of Pharisaism: A Study in 1 and 2 Maccabees* (Atlanta, 1988) 66–81; G. Vermes, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, 1999) 127–69.

[80] See above, p. 35.

fulfilment of this promise was still to come. The majority of the population of Israel had greeted with enthusiasm the partition of the old British mandate territory by the United Nations into an Arab and a Jewish state (Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947) and had celebrated the proclamation of Israel as an independent state on 14 May 1948. But in the eyes of the ultraorthodox, the ending of the exile and the settlement of Palestine were matters exclusive to the Messiah. Jews were permitted to live in Palestine only for the purpose of studying the Torah; anyone who cultivated the land was sinning against its holiness and betraying the faith in the future coming of the Messiah.

There was, however, one rabbi in the ultraorthodox camp who had elaborated a religious justification for the foundation of the secular state of Israel: Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935). He understood the secular Zionist project in terms of a philosophy of history, as an advance of messianism that was independent of the intentions of the secular Zionists. His son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook (1891–1982), acquired the reputation of a prophet through the surprising words that he uttered on 14 May 1967.[81] A few days before the Six-Day War in June 1967, he preached in his *yeshiva* and abruptly broke into a lamentation that Israel had been divided in 1947/48:

> 'They divided my land!' [Joel 4:2], he shouted. Then forcefully, with a fierce love for the Torah and the honor of God, he cried: 'And where is our Hevron?! Do we forget this?! And where is our Shechem?! Do we forget about this?! And where is our Jericho?! Do we forget this too?!'[82]

When Israel's troops ended this state of affairs a few weeks later and wrested the ancient biblical places from the Palestinians as if by miracle, the students and rabbis of his school saw the military victory as a proof of his prophetic abilities. They agreed with him that the Six-Day War was a 'war of redemption' and adopted in practical terms the interpretation of the new situation by organising – against the hesitation of the Labour Party government – the settlement of the West Bank or the Occupied Territories, or what they now called Judaea, Samaria and Gaza.[83] The faith in the promise had become a practical script for action, which a right-wing

[81] On the two Kooks, see G. Aran, 'The Father, the Son, and the Holy Land', in S. Appleby (ed.), *Spokesmen for the Despised* (Chicago, 1997) 294–327.

[82] See the account of this sermon in D. Samson, *Torat Eretz Yisrael: The Teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook* (Jerusalem, 1991) 337–40 (quote at p. 339).

[83] G. Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967–1977* (New York, 2006) 12.

government could make an instrument of its official policy when a suitable occasion arose. The military victory over the Arabs was anchored in Israel's salvation history and this new definition of the situation in the Occupied Territories became the presupposition of a wave of violence: by settlers and ultraorthodox against Palestinians and dissident Jews, and, on the other side, by Palestinians among themselves and vis-à-vis Israelis.

This case shows clearly that a religion can become violent but not that it always is violent *per se*, nor that it must remain violent. The Israeli Paul Mendes-Flohr has published writings by Martin Buber (1878–1965) in English translation, in which he argues that the Jews and Arabs were in a conflict that must be recognised as such – instead of trying to resolve it with violence.[84] Both peoples have deep ties to the land. Only the Bible (not politics) can teach the Jews how to deal correctly with the conflict and use their love for the land to develop it jointly. In February 1939, Buber wrote in a letter to Mahatma Gandhi, who had spoken critically of Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine:

> [T]he Bible tells us ... that ... our entry into this land was in the consciousness of a mission from above to set up a just way of life ... realized not by individuals in the sphere of their private existence but only by a nation in the establishment of its society: communal ownership of the land, regularly recurrent leveling of social distinctions, guarantee of the independence of each individual, mutual help, a common Sabbath embracing serf and beast as beings with equal claim, a Sabbatical year whereby ... everybody is admitted to the free enjoyment of its fruits.[85]

In this spirit, the organisation *Ta'ayush* (literally 'coexistence' or 'life in common'), in which Israelis and Palestinians work side by side, was founded in 2000.[86] Its activities and fight against injustice done to Palestinians show that the Jewish religion possesses sacred prefigurations for a peaceful way of dealing with the conflict.[87]

Turning now to the Islamic perspective, when the revolution in Iran shook up the Muslim world at the close of the 1970s, Muslims in Palestine who belonged to a new generation no longer stuck to the official line of the Muslim Brotherhood, who held that the time for the struggle against Israel had not yet come. Militant Islamist groups sprang up everywhere.[88]

[84] P. Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (Oxford, 1983).
[85] Ibid., 118. [86] See the website of the organisation at www.taayush.org/?page_id=61.
[87] Report on these activities by D. Shulman, *Dark Hope: Working for Peace in Israel and Palestine* (Chicago, 2007).
[88] R. Paz, 'The Development of Palestinian Islamic Groups', in B. Rubin (ed.), *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East* (Albany, 2003) 23–40.

A significant change for the Muslim Brotherhood came in 1987, when the many small conflicts between Palestinians and settlers or Israeli troops in the Occupied Territories swelled into a comprehensive uprising, the First Intifada. In order to coordinate the unrest, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which at that time had its headquarters in Tunisia, set up a Supreme Command. In this situation, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his fellow-brethren from the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza decided not to leave the coordination of the uprising to the PLO and its United National Command (UNC) alone, but to found a specific local organisation in Palestine for this goal, the 'Islamic Resistance Movement' (*harakat al-muqawama al-Islamiyya*), with the acronym *hamas*, 'zeal'.[89]

In its first communiqué, Hamas laments the occupation of the land, expropriations, the construction of settlements and subjugation to the Zionists.[90] These complaints are the cause of the uprising – exactly what Stern argues is the presupposition of terrorism.[91] Here, it is not only those directly affected who speak but the entire people of the Muslims, who take revenge for the hurt to their honour and re-establish their earlier glory, as the second communiqué states – not without adding that zeal has died out in Egypt and that only the Palestinians are now offering resistance.[92]

The Hamas Covenant sums all this up in one single sacrilege that belongs to salvation history: the desecration of sacred territory. Article 11 states that Palestine is a consecrated Islamic land:

> The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgment Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered; it, or any part of it, should not be given up.[93]

This definition of the land may appear old, but in reality Hamas formulated a concept that was coined only in the twentieth century in the conflict with Zionism and that thereby made political history the history of salvation or damnation.[94] On the analogy of the Jewish idea of a 'redemption' of the

[89] On the history of Hamas in general, see K. Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington, 2000); S. Mishal and A. Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York, 2000); H. Baumgarten, *Hamas: Der politische Islam in Palästina* (Munich, 2006); J. Croitoru, *Hamas: Der islamische Kampf um Palästina* (Munich, 2007); Z. Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of Militants, Martyrs and Spies* (London, 2007).

[90] S. Mishal and R. Aharoni, *Speaking Stones: Communiqués from the Intifada Underground* (Syracuse, 1994) 202.

[91] See above, pp. 24–25.

[92] Mishal and Aharoni, *Speaking Stones*, 205.

[93] Available online at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

[94] G. Krämer, *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton, 2008) 249–54. On the legal institution of the *waqf*, see J.-P. Hartung, 'Die fromme

land, Muslims demanded its 'rescue'. The staging of the traditional model gives orientation in the current situation, which, as Juergensmeyer has described it, is an autonomous element of performative action.[95]

In Article 12 of the Covenant, we read: 'Nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part of the religious creed'. And, a little further, in Article 15: 'The day that enemies usurp part of Muslim land, Jihad becomes the individual duty of every Muslim. In face of the Jews' usurpation of Palestine, it is compulsory that the banner of Jihad be raised'. This programme proves Greenblatt's concept of 'cultural mobility', with which he wants to avoid the choice of seeing in such concepts either an original autochthonous Islamic tradition or a postmodern invention. It draws on ancient concepts to define the contemporary situation of the Islamic community facing the occupation of its land by Israeli troops. These concepts have attained their present-day meaning in the light of current circumstances.

The fact that this programme provided the Palestinians with legitimation for violence is shown by their willingness in 1991 to set up a brigade tasked with the military protection of the Islamic territory against the Israeli army and with the armed struggle against Israel. It was named after Izz al-Din al-Qassem, thereby harking back to interreligious clashes in the 1930s. The jihadists who died in the fight were revered by their adherents as martyrs who were entitled to hope for immediate redemption.[96] Today's stories and accounts of martyrs have their origin in such conflicts and proclaim that one should take part in them.[97]

The suspicion has been voiced that Islam – quite independently of the Middle East conflict – is *per se* a religion of violence and war. In the 1953 *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, we read under 'Djihād, holy war': 'The spread of Islām by arms is a religious duty upon Muslims in general'.[98] David Cook, an Islamic studies scholar, agrees that this was the original and true meaning of 'jihad'. It is indeed correct that some Islamic sources

Stiftung (*waqf*): Eine islamische Analogie zur Körperschaft?', in H. G. Kippenberg and G. F. Schuppert (eds.), *Die verrechtlichte Religion: Der Öffentlichkeitsstatus von Religionsgemeinschaften* (Tübingen, 2005) 287–314, esp. pp. 298–303.

[95] See above, pp. 33–34.

[96] D. Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge, 2007) 135–64; A. Afsaruddin, 'Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought and History' (2016), in Barton, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, pp. 1–28, available online at http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-46.

[97] Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam*, 154–61, provides an overview of these 'contemporary martyrologies'.

[98] D. B. Macdonald, 'Djihād, Holy War', in H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (eds.), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1953) 89.

ascribe a redemptive function to the martial jihad, claiming that death on the battlefield wipes away all sins and transgressions.[99]

The narrowing-down of jihad to war does not, however, apply to the whole of Islamic history and culture, as Asma Afsaruddin has shown.[100] While legal literature predominantly understands 'jihad' as an armed struggle, the exegetical literature displays a broader spectrum of meanings for this term. As 'striving on the path of God' it designates both physical and spiritual endeavours (the literal meaning of *jahada*). This broader understanding of jihad is found in the Hadith collections, for example, where the support of widows and the poor is seen as a struggle on the path of God. It is not always prescribed to fight: a truce (*hudna*) can also come into question and other actions can be equal in value to military struggles. The Prophet counselled his adherents to bear (*ṣabr*) hostility patiently.[101] Afsaruddin thus overcomes the narrowing-down to the martial struggle with the aid of the semantics of *jihad* and martyrdom (*shahid*) in the Quran and Hadith literature that is rich in variants. In addition to the high appreciation of the performance of martial jihad, the achievement of patience (*ṣabr*) or of a truce (*hudna*) was equally prized. Both attitudes are found again and again in the history of Islam, reflecting the various situations in which the early community once found itself in Mecca and Medina. On the basis of her conclusions, Afsaruddin distances herself emphatically from modern suicide attacks legitimised under the aegis of jihad, even in the Occupied Territories, where, for example, Yusuf al-Qaradawi allowed them.[102]

Conclusion: Methodological Rules for the Investigation of the Relationship between Religious Communities and Acts of Violence

The case of the Middle East shows how the link between religion and violence came about: a secular conflict between a faith community and external powers is defined in religious terms; the one who rejects the

[99] D. Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, 2005) 13: 'Because of the miracle of the conquests [of the Prophet], jihad emerged as one of the core elements of Islam'.

[100] A. Afsaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God* (Oxford, 2013), and 'Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought and History'.

[101] *Sura* 3:200.

[102] A. Afsaruddin, 'Martyrdom in Islamic Thought and Practice: A Historical Survey', in D. Janes and A. Houen (eds.), *Martyrdom and Terrorism: Pre-Modern to Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford, 2014) 40–58.

covenant with God is violently removed from the community; the act of violence is performed in agreement with sacred prefigurations, by which they acquire a contemporary significance; violence brings the perpetrator and his or her religious community salvation and wards off mischief; and differences in ethics (for instance, ethics of responsibility or ethics of conviction) determine the mode of action. Consequently, we should not ascribe unambiguous values to Judaism or Islam, or indeed religions in general. On the contrary, we must recognise that in Judaism, Islam and religious communities in general mutually contradictory evaluations that guide action can be actualised in different situations.

The Jewish and Islamic definitions of the conflict and the legitimations of action that are inferred from these definitions confirm an approach to religion and violence that excludes every kind of necessary link. A conjunction of religion and violence is neither impossible nor necessary; it is, in the words of Michael Makropoulos, 'contingent'. It is even double contingent, that is, it depends on the type of conflict and the sacred prefigurations of the religion concerned.[103] Attempts to demonstrate that religions are in essence peaceful are just as one-sided as attempts that seek in religion the sole cause of violence and conflict.[104] Neither position is wrong, but they fail to take into account the other side.[105]

On the basis of the cases described above, I would like to end by formulating some methodological rules for studying religious violence:

1 Religious violence ought to be understood not as an irrational eruption, but as a shared common social action.
2 One must draw a distinction between the personal motives of the perpetrator(s) and the meaning of the action. The meaning cannot be given by the agent alone; it is linked to the communication in his or her religious community and to the possibility of 'cultural mobility'. This meaning is not an abstract value that a religious community propagates; it is generated by a definition of the situation in which a community finds itself.
3 The script of action is based on prefigurations in the canonical religious tradition. The agents believe that the repetition of such a model

[103] M. Makropoulos, 'Kontingenz: Aspekte einer theoretischen Semantik der Moderne', *Archives européennes de sociologie* 45 (2004) 369–99.
[104] E.g. M. Weingardt, *Religion macht Frieden: Das Friedenspotential von Religionen in politischen Gewaltkonflikten* (Stuttgart, 2007).
[105] H. G. Kippenberg, 'Die Macht religiöser Vergemeinschaftung als Quelle religiöser Ambivalenz', in B. Oberdorfer and P. Waldmann (eds.), *Die Ambivalenz des Religiösen: Religionen als Friedenstifter und Gewalterzeuger* (Freiburg i. Br., 2008) 53–76.

guarantees their success. With their action, they are staging a sacred case and at the same time actualising it in its public meaning. Both of these elements constitute a performance.

4 A variety of participants (the media, law enforcement, religious specialists, politicians, legal scholars) are involved in the drama of a conflict of this kind. As agents, they represent the various patterns of interpretation of the conflict in the public arena and thereby various courses that the conflict can take.

5 A religious community can justify an act of violence, but it can also be divided on the question of its religious justification. The religions discussed here understand themselves as communities that teach and practise the original religion of Abraham and as bearers of the promise that was given to him. The biblical narratives that they have in common now supply the material for contrasting salvation-historical models that provide guidance in conduct.

6 In the investigation of the religious definition of a conflict, its character must be determined independently of religion. Whether the conflict is political, economic, legal, social or religious, religion can be the content of a conflict ('sectarianism') or the framework of a secular conflict. A religious definition can embrace fundamentally different types of conflict. The central point is the perspective of the religious community that sees itself affected by the conflict – for example, the humiliation of the believers, the miraculous victory of God over their foes, the war of the unbelievers against God. A description and explanation of the conflict in terms of sociology and cultural science, on the one hand, and a thick description of the religious performance of the sacred act of violence, on the other, are the two scientific approaches to explaining the link between religion and violence. Every religious act of violence must be studied from both perspectives, as an instrumental action – a means to define, resolve and overcome the conflict in which a religious community finds itself – and as a performative action, a performance of violence in accordance with religious models that are actualised. The two together are different aspects of one and the same action.

CHAPTER 2

*Priestesses, Pogroms and Persecutions: Religious Violence in Antiquity in a Diachronic Perspective**

Jan N. Bremmer

Introduction

It was the sixth of the month of Av, 5416, that is 27 July 1656, when the Ark in the synagogue of Talmud Torah, the united congregation of the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam, proclaimed an excommunication:

> By decree of the angels and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse and damn Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of God, Blessed be He, and with the consent of the entire holy congregation, and in front of these holy scrolls with the 613 precepts which are written therein; cursing him with the excommunication with which Joshua banned Jericho and with the curse which Elisha cursed the boys and with all the castigations which are written in the Book of the Law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in.[1]

With these words began the excommunication of one of the greatest philosophers of the Western world and, arguably, the leading light of the Radical Enlightenment.

Let us now fast forward. On 12 February 2015, Islamic State released a video showing the beheading of twenty Egyptian Coptic Christians and one Ghanaian – all migrant workers – who had been kidnapped in the city of Sirte, in Libya, to 'avenge the [alleged] kidnapping of Muslim women by the Egyptian Coptic Church'. Less than a week later, on 21 February 2015, Pope Tawadros III, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, announced that the twenty-one murdered Copts would be commemorated

* I am most grateful to the organisers of the conference for the invitation to give the lecture in Montreal and to the audience for their comments, to Jitse Dijkstra for his scrutiny of my text and to Lydia Schriemer for the skillful correction of my English.

[1] I quote the translation from the Portuguese by A. Kasher and S. Biderman, 'Why Was Baruch de Spinoza Excommunicated?', in D. S. Katz and J. I. Israel (eds.), *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews* (Leiden, 1990) 98–141 at 99.

as martyr saints on 8 Amshir of the Coptic calendar, which is 15 February of the Gregorian calendar.[2]

These two examples show something of the enormous diversity of our modern idea of 'religious violence'. At the same time, they also show the gap between the world of modern Western people, that of the seventeenth-century Portuguese Jews and that of certain sections of contemporary Muslims. Evidently, religious violence is a label that people will attach to others with whose actions they do not agree, and it is a term that comprises a wide spectrum of words and actions. But before we come to that, it is good to realise that the term 'religious violence' is not particularly old and only emerged in English in the last decades of the eighteenth century.[3] Moreover, the first time the term actually appeared in the titles of articles and dissertations was only in the 1980s.[4] In the 1990s we find the term five times in titles, twice in connection with Nigeria,[5] but in 2000 the phrase took off and became more popular, although less than perhaps would be expected: about 700,000 hits on Google.[6] Not surprisingly, though, especially after 2001 we also find an increasing number of books and articles on violence and religion as well as Islam and violence.[7] So the term 'religious violence' is clearly a fruit of the Enlightenment, but at the end of our contribution we will have to come back to the problem of whether we should speak of religious violence or of violence and religion, be it Islam, Christianity or other.

[2] See https://davidalton.net/2016/02/12/february-anniversary-of-the-brutal-murder-of-21-coptic-christians-in-libya-one-year-ago/.

[3] *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* 54 (1774) 227; *The Westminster Magazine, or: The Pantheon of Taste* 6 (1778) 186; *The Monthly Review, or: Literary Journal Enlarged* (1795) 246.

[4] B. Bubacz, 'Religious Violence', *American Rationalist* (July–August 1985) 30–32; W. E. Herbrechtsmeier, *The Biblical Legacy of Religious Violence: The Evolution of Deuteronomic Law and Israelite Religious Culture* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; New York, 1987).

[5] M. Newton and J. A. Newton (eds.), *Racial and Religious Violence in America: A Chronology* (New York, 1991); D. A. Blanchard, *Religious Violence and Abortion: The Gideon Project* (Gainesville, 1993); P. Umechukwu, *The Press Coverage of Religious Violence in Nigeria* (Enugu, 1995); S. Agi, *The Political History of Religious Violence in Nigeria* (Calabar, 1998); M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2005), going back to a doctoral dissertation defended at Princeton in 1999.

[6] E.g. M. Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, 2000); I. Reader, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyō* (Honolulu, 2000); A. S. Abulafia (ed.), *Religious Violence between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives* (New York, 2002); C. Selengut, *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence* (Walnut Creek, 2003).

[7] E.g. J. H. Ehrenkranz and D. L. Coppola (eds.), *Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace* (Fairfield, CT, 2000); H. de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore, 2002); J. Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran* (Harrisburg, 2003); B. Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence in the Modern Era* (Basingstoke, 2006).

Let us now turn to the nature of violence. With the Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung we could perhaps call the performative words of Spinoza's excommunication 'cultural violence' and the beheading of the Coptic Christians physical violence.[8] Although cultural violence in the way of violent rhetoric becomes increasingly frequent in Late Antiquity, in particular with authors like John Chrysostom, I will concentrate in this chapter on physical or, as Galtung calls it, direct violence and take a diachronic perspective in order to see if the place of physical violence in ancient society changed with the decline of Greece, the rise of Rome and the emergence of Christianity. Obviously, in the limited space available, I can only look at some aspects. I have therefore selected various cases that are not treated by the other contributors to this volume, but which also show different sides and problems of ancient violence. I will first discuss two cases from ancient Athens, then look at an example of interethnic and religious violence in Roman Alexandria, continue with the persecutions of the Christians and conclude with a famous case of Christian violence.[9]

Socrates and Phryne

Let us start with what is probably one of the most famous cases of religious violence, the execution of Socrates. His case will also show us one of the problems of our subject, which is not only the precise definition of violence, but also that of religion.[10] In 399 BC the Athenians brought Socrates to trial on a charge of impiety, which has been literally preserved: 'Socrates does wrong by not acknowledging the gods the city acknowledges, and introducing other, new religious powers (*daimonia*). He also does wrong by corrupting the young. The penalty should be death'.[11]

[8] J. Galtung, 'Cultural Violence', *Journal of Peace Research* 27 (1990) 291–305. For the different kinds of violence distinguished by Galtung, see in more detail the General Introduction, p. 3, and Bendlin, pp. 144–45, both this volume. These distinctions are insufficiently taken into account by G. Stroumsa, 'Open Religion and Its Enemies', in J. Sacks and S. Burridge (eds.), *Confronting Religious Violence: A Counternarrative* (Waco, 2018) 59–73, 231–34.

[9] This chapter builds upon my earlier study 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', in A.-K. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Early Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) 8–30.

[10] See also the General Introduction, pp. 3–4.

[11] The original wording has been handed down by Favorinus fr. 34 Barigazzi = Diogenes Laertius 2.40; trans. R. Parker, *Athenian Religion* (Oxford, 1996) 201, slightly adapted. See also Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.1.1, and *Apology* 10; Plato, *Apology* 24b8–c1, and *Eutyphron* 3b; Philodemus, *On Piety* 1696–97 (Obbink); Justin Martyr, *Apologia* 1.5.3 (*SC* 507, pp. 138–40); Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid of Virgil* 8.187.

The trial of Socrates has often been discussed,[12] but here I would like to draw attention to three aspects.

First, in what is still one of the best studies of Socrates' trial, the great ancient historian Moses Finley (1912–86) noted that in Greece religion was 'thoroughly enmeshed with the family and the state. Impiety was, therefore, a very loose notion'. Consequently, 'the frequency of such charges and trials in Athens depended largely on the state of public opinion at any given moment'.[13] With this observation, Finley was perhaps the first to note the, what we call today, 'embedded' character of Greek religion.[14] The Greeks had no word for our 'religion', which since the late eighteenth century has developed more and more into a separate, private sphere in the Western world,[15] unlike in modern Islamic countries, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, where the situation in this respect resembles that of Greece and Rome and, in many respects, the West in the Middle Ages.[16] In every Athenian impiety trial, then, a jury of about five hundred men had to decide whether the charge was persuasive or whether the charged offence constituted an acceptable exception to the norm. It is all too often forgotten that even in the case of Socrates, as Plato notes in his *Apology*,[17] a change of opinion of about thirty jurors would have robbed us of the dramatic outcome of one of the most famous trials in history. Consequently, as Finley observed: 'When impiety – and this is only an example – is a catch basin, no man is safe'.[18]

Second, there has been a long line of philosophers, starting with David Hume (1711–76), who have argued that polytheism is much more tolerant than monotheism. Along the same lines, the famous Egyptologist Jan

[12] For the charge and the trial, see Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 199–207; A. Rubel, *Stadt in Angst: Religion und Politik in Athen während des Peloponnesischen Krieges* (Darmstadt, 2000) 342–63; P. Millett, 'The Trial of Socrates Revisited', *European Review of History* 12 (2005) 23–62; J. Ober, 'Socrates and Democratic Athens', in D. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (Cambridge, 2011) 138–78; H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods* (Leiden, 2011) 554–59.

[13] M. F. Finley, 'Socrates and Athens', repr. in his *Aspects of Antiquity* (London, 1968) 58–72 at 64.

[14] For the term, see R. Parker, 'Greek Religion', in J. Boardman, J. Griffin and O. Murray (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Classical World* (Oxford, 1986) 254–74 at 265. The counter-arguments of B. Nongbri, 'Dislodging "Embedded" Religion: A Brief Note on a Scholarly Trope', *Numen* 55 (2008) 440–60 are not really persuasive. For interesting considerations about the relation between religion and culture, see M. Scheer, 'Kultur und Religion: Eine Unschärferelation mit Folgen', *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 113 (2017) 179–200.

[15] For this development, see E. Feil, *Religio*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Göttingen, 1986–2012).

[16] See also the considerations of C. Rouxpetel, 'La notion de "fait religieux" peut-elle rendre compte des constructions médiévales de l'altérité?', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 129 (2017) (available online at http://journals.openedition.org/mefrim/3407).

[17] Plato, *Apology* 36a.

[18] Finley, 'Socrates and Athens', 72.

Assmann has issued a series of publications in recent decades arguing that monotheism with its claim of the truth in some ways was a forerunner of the modern totalitarian state with its concentration camps.[19] Yet when we look at countries like India, Myanmar, China or Japan, which severely persecuted Christians in the seventeenth century, it is obvious that this is basically more an anti-Christian or anti-Jewish argument than a conclusion based on a global historical analysis.[20] Polytheism can be as ruthless as monotheist religions, occasionally even against other polytheisms, also in the ancient world,[21] and my first thesis therefore is: *generalising statements about religious violence always have to be based on a global perspective*. This is all the more the case, as recent studies have shown that terms like 'persecution' and 'martyr' do not always have the same meaning in East and West.[22]

Third, and coming back to our first point, we have little idea of the motives of the jurors who condemned Socrates to death. There can be no doubt that Socrates, who was, so to speak, the Charles Taylor of Athens, must have been an irritating fellow whose interrogation of traditional wisdom may well have rubbed many of the jurors the wrong way. Moreover, Xenophon, who was a contemporary of the trial, relates in his *Apology* that a number of jurors were envious of Socrates in response to the special relationship with the divine that he claimed.[23] In the end we simply cannot be certain of the motives of the jurors, but it is striking that the later Greek tradition hardly paid any attention to the religious point and

[19] J. Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich, 2003), and *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Vienna, 2006). See also the General Introduction, p. 4, and Kippenberg, pp. 17–18, both this volume.

[20] For criticisms of Assmann, see esp. A. Fürst, 'Monotheismus und Gewalt: Fragen an die Frühzeit des Christentums', *Stimmen der Zeit* 222 (2004) 521–31; C. Frevel, 'Einer für alle? Leistung und Schwächen des Biblischen Monotheismus – eine Auseinandersetzung mit Jan Assmann am Beispiel des Jeremiabuches', in R. Althaus, K. Lüdicke and M. Pulte (eds.), *Kirchenrecht und Theologie im Leben der Kirche* (Essen, 2007) 503–24; R. Bloch, 'Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der paganen Antike: Zu Jan Assmanns Monotheismus-Kritik', in R. Bloch et al. (eds.), *Fremdbilder – Selbstbilder: Imaginationen des Judentums von der Antike bis in die Neuzeit* (Basel, 2010) 5–24; J. N. Bremmer, 'Religious Violence and Its Roots: A View from Antiquity', *Asdiwal* 6 (2011) 71–79 (repr. in W. Mayer and C. de Wet [eds.], *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* [London, 2018] 30–42), which I freely use in this section. See also Kippenberg, this volume, pp. 29–30.

[21] Cf. R. Payne, *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Oakland, 2015) 23, 33 (Zoroastrians against Buddhism). *Contra* R. Parker, *Greek Gods Abroad* (Oakland, 2017) 76.

[22] H. Omata Rappo, 'Les aventures du mot "martyre" entre l'Asie et l'Europe ou les aléas de la traduction', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 129 (2017) (available online at http://journals.openedition.org/mefrim/3407).

[23] Xenophon, *Apology* 14.3.

mainly focused on Socrates' close relationship with anti-democratic politicians, except for the early Christians, who compared some of their martyrs to Socrates.[24] Our view of religion as a separate sphere may well make us see things differently from Socrates' contemporaries and overrate the religious aspect.

On the other hand, the religious aspect is clearer in our second Athenian example: the trial of the famous courtesan Phryne. Around 347 or 338 BC a former lover accused her of impiety, and the summary of the charges against her has been preserved: 'Phryne accused of impiety (*asebeia*): for she held a procession (*komos*) in the Lykeion, introduced a new god and assembled revel bands (*thiasoi*) consisting of both men and women'.[25] Apparently, as a priestess, Phryne had founded a new cult, centred on Isodaites, a god connected to the symposium, together with Dionysiac features of the ritual but probably also mysteries-like aspects. However, whereas normally Dionysiac groups at that time consisted of either men or women, Phryne had mixed the two sexes. As a non-Athenian woman and courtesan, Phryne was excluded from the most prestigious Athenian women's festival, the Thesmophoria, and, apparently, tried to compensate for her social and religious challenges by constructing her own cult, just as through the centuries women have either founded or joined new cults and religions to enable their self-realisation.[26]

Now it was not unusual at all in Athens to introduce a new cult or a new god.[27] However, by doing so, Phryne was treading on dangerous ground. The Athenians saw revel bands of non-Athenians as potential centres of crime and social subversion. In the case of Phryne, the prosecutor used this feeling and connected it to the charge of the introduction of a new god. As Robert Parker notes, 'the unlicensed god is exposed to suspicion, hostility, contempt, and the threat of actual repressive action'.[28] In the case of Phryne, her high visibility as a top courtesan coupled with her non-Athenian status

[24] K. Döring, *Exemplum Socratis* (Wiesbaden, 1979) 143–61; E. Dassmann, 'Christus und Soktrates', *JbAC* 36 (1993) 33–45 at 39; T. Baumeister, *Martyrium, Hagiographie und Heiligenverehrung im christlichen Altertum* (Freiburg, 2009) 22; L Saudelli, 'Le Socrate de Tertullien', *REAug* 59 (2013) 23–53.

[25] Euthias fr. 2 Baiter and Sauppe = *Anonymus Seguerianus* 215 (pp. 40–41 Patillon); if not otherwise indicated, translations in this chapter are mine.

[26] See, with a number of examples from Antiquity, my 'Why Did Early Christianity Attract Upper-Class Women?', repr., with updates, in J. N. Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity* (Tübingen, 2017) 33–41.

[27] For a good discussion of introductions of new gods, see R. Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca, 2011) 273–77.

[28] Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 163.

must have made her vulnerable in any case. By treading on religious ground, she challenged fate.

Unlike the case of Socrates, we may well suspect here more personal reasons, as her accuser was a former and, presumably, jilted lover. The fact shows how tricky the Athenian laws of impiety were. The reason why Phryne escaped – unlike the defendants in two other cases known from the fourth century BC in which self-made priestesses were executed on the basis of comparable charges[29] – is fairly certain. During the trial her lover, the famous orator Hyperides, ripped open Phryne's dress and showed her breasts to the jurors. According to ancient sources, Phryne was always careful in not showing herself naked, apparently unlike many other courtesans.[30] So, this sight and, it was said, the superstitious fear that they might kill a priestess of Aphrodite (presumably because of her beauty) made the jurors let her go free.[31] The gesture was famous in Antiquity and the subject of various famous paintings in the more recent past, when the naked bodies of models and movie stars were not yet available with a click of the mouse.

The fame of these trials should not conceal the fact that trials with fatal outcomes were few in number. Evidently, the ancient Greek city was reasonably tolerant regarding deviant religious opinions and innovative cults. People could proclaim agnostic ideas and introduce new gods. But there always was a chance that somebody would charge you with impiety for personal or political reasons. So my second thesis is: *the ancient Greek city was tolerant in religious matters, but the legal situation did not offer protection against personal or political accusations of impiety, and the outcome of such trials was always uncertain.*

The 'Pogrom' of Alexandria in AD 38

Let us now move to a different kind of violence: a murderous clash between Greeks and Judaeans in Alexandria, which has been called the

[29] K. Trampedach, 'Gefährliche Frauen: Zu athenischen Asebie-Prozessen im 4. Jh. v. Chr.', in R. von den Hoff and S. Schmidt (eds.), *Konstruktionen von Wirklichkeit: Bilder im Griechenland des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Stuttgart, 2001) 137–55; E. Eidinow, 'Patterns of Persecution: "Witchcraft" Trials in Classical Athens', *P&P* 208 (2010) 9–35, and *Envy, Poison, and Death: Women on Trial in Classical Athens* (Oxford, 2016) 11–30.

[30] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 2.15.9; Athenaeus 13.590–91; cf. the painting by H. Siemiradzki, *Phryne at the Poseidonia in Eleusis*, *c.* 1889.

[31] Idomeneus of Lampsacus, *FGrH* 338 fr. 14 = *BNJ* 338 fr. 14a; Hermippus of Smyrna, *FGrH* 1026 fr. 46a; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 2.15.9; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lives of the Ten Orators* 849d–e; Athenaeus 13.590d–f; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 2.4.

first pogrom in history. Such modern riots and massacres have been well studied in recent decades, but what did an ancient one look like?[32] Fortunately, we have a fairly detailed description of such a case, which took place in Alexandria in AD 38. Alexandria was a metropolis and a cultural melting pot, like modern New York, with probably more than half a million inhabitants.[33] Perhaps 10–20 per cent of the inhabitants were of Judaean origin,[34] but the city also included Greeks and Egyptians, in addition to numerous other peoples,[35] and any quantification cannot be more than a reasonable guess. Among this population, it was only the elite of the Greeks that possessed proper citizen rights, and above them was the tiny real upper echelon of Roman citizens.[36] Yet several Judaeans had also gained citizenship, such as the famous Judaean scholar Philo, who is also our only and of course not unbiased source.[37] Even though there probably had been tensions between the various groups, at least between Judaeans and Greeks, as well as between Egyptians and Judaeans, the riot itself seems to have been triggered by an unexpected event.

In the summer of 38, Alexandria received a visit from Herod Agrippa I, a Judaean who had been appointed king of Palestine by the Roman Emperor Caligula. Agrippa's appearance on the Alexandrian scene sparked a series of events that would be highly damaging to the Judaeans. Recent pogrom research has stressed that pogroms depend on a contingent trigger event, an 'outrageous event' that causes fury among the majority and leads to a critical mass of people prepared to participate in collective action.[38] This is exactly what happened in Alexandria. Agrippa's visit and his splendid retinue of bodyguards with their weapons adorned with silver

[32] Cf. the overview of modern research on violent crowd behaviour by Dijkstra, this volume, pp. 288–91.

[33] G. Hinge and J. A. Krasilnikoff (eds.), *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot* (Aarhus, 2009).

[34] For the population numbers, see D. Delia, 'The Population of Roman Alexandria', *TAPA* 118 (1988) 275–92; W. Ameling, '"Market-place" und Gewalt: Die Juden in Alexandrien 38 n. Chr.', *WJA* 27 (2003) 71–123 at 82–87.

[35] Virtually all modern studies focus on the number of Judaeans, none on that of the Greeks and Egyptians, but we know that Egyptians had participated in the foundation of Alexandria: Pseudo-Aristotle, *Economics* 2.2.33c; Curtius 4.8.5.

[36] For the Alexandrian social and political stratigraphy, see S. Honigman, 'Philon, Flavius Josèphe et la citoyenneté alexandrine: vers une utopie politique', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48 (1997) 62–90; Ameling, '"Market-Place" und Gewalt', 99–100; B. Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire* (Leiden, 2015) 77–112.

[37] In the text I refer with numbers to the chapters of our main source, Philo's *Flaccus*, which should be read with the commentary by P. W. van der Horst, *Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom* (Leiden, 2003).

[38] W. Bergmann, 'Pogrome', in W. Heitmeyer and J. Hagan (eds.), *Internationales Handbuch der Gewaltforschung* (Wiesbaden, 2002) 441–60 at 454.

and gold (30) had suddenly disturbed the civil balance in Alexandria. Immediately after Agrippa's departure, Greeks started to make fun of his visit in the gymnasium. Philo calls those mocking the king an 'undisciplined mob' (35),[39] but research into Roman and comparable mobs suggests that such labelling misjudges the fact that these crowds often consisted of artisans and even those higher up the social scale.[40]

Moreover, pogrom research suggests the presence of 'entrepeneurs' who lead the action and guide it in a specific direction.[41] In our case, the gymnasiarchs Isidorus (20) and Lampo (139) – Greeks belonging to the highest class – played a leading role. It is important to note that gathering in the gymnasium was already part and parcel of the repertory of riotous behaviour in Ptolemaic times,[42] as also pogroms and early modern religious riots were often not invented from scratch but served a purpose and had some historically developed structure, perhaps even a kind of script for riot performances.[43] Early next morning the crowd – perhaps now receiving support from local Egyptians – moved to the theatre (41), probably because it offered more space than the gymnasium, which was also reserved for Greeks only.

Here events took a further turn for the worse, as the rioters required statues of Caligula[44] to be set up in the synagogues (42), an act that was allowed by the Roman governor, Flaccus (43). The worship of the imperial statues was a kind of 'identity marker' of the Greeks, which they now imposed on the holiest places of the Judaeans. The violence then spread beyond the theatre to various parts of the city, where synagogues were occupied by the Alexandrian pogromists, who apparently destroyed (45) and burnt some as well as re-dedicating others to Caligula,[45] removing their names (53). Here we need to briefly touch on a recent discussion. Various scholars have persuasively argued that the ancient term *Ioudaioi*

[39] See also Philo, *Flaccus* 33, 41, 65, and *Embassy to Gaius* 67, 120, 132.

[40] P. A. Brunt, 'The Roman Mob', *P&P* 35 (1966) 3–27 (repr. in M. I. Finley [ed.], *Studies in Ancient Society* [London, 1974] 74–102); N. Z. Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', *P&P* 59 (1973) 51–91 at 85–89 (repr. in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* [Stanford, 1975] 152–87 at 182–84); F. Millar, *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (Ann Arbor, 2002).

[41] Bergmann, 'Pogrome', 454.

[42] F. Burkhalter, 'Le gymnase d'Alexandrie: centre administratif de la province romaine d'Égypte', *BCH* 116 (1992) 345–73; W. Habermann, 'Aspekte des römerzeitlichen Gymnasiums in Ägypten', *APF* 61 (2015) 384–423 at 399–401.

[43] Cf. Davis, 'Rites of Violence', 91 (repr. in her *Society and Culture*, 187). For acts of religious violence as 'performance violence', see Kippenberg, this volume, esp. pp. 33–34.

[44] Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 134. [45] Ibid., 134–37.

should not be translated with 'Jews' but 'Judaeans'.[46] Undoubtedly, it is correct that normally *Ioudaioi* refers to an ethnic group. Yet the fact that the rioters concentrated on the synagogues shows that the religion of the Judaeans had caught the attention of the other inhabitants of Alexandria. Moreover, even though Philo, like some other former Judaeans, was an Alexandrian citizen, he certainly considered himself, in our terms, a Jew. Although I will use the term Judaean in the rest of this section, then, in this riot the term clearly implies a strong religious aspect that must have been considered a vital part of the Judaean identity.

Until this point, the Roman governor, Flaccus, had been a more or less passive onlooker, but he now issued a decree curtailing all the Judaeans' legal and political rights (53–54) and gave permission to loot their possessions (54). Such a measure could hardly have been taken without consulting the emperor,[47] but the looting of shops and houses (90) will also have been a 'natural' consequence of the collapse of law and order. Moreover, a kind of ethnic cleansing of the Judaeans from most districts now took place, and Philo's description of Judaean refugees at the beaches and *necropoleis* (56–57) dying of starvation (62) has a distressing modern resemblance. The period of looting culminated in the murders of those Judaeans unlucky enough to fall into the hands of the rioting crowd (65–72).[48]

After the execution of a number of Judaean notables, the riots fizzled out, as they normally do. Even though Philo's account is biased, it is clear that the pogromists were led by members of the Greek elite, who made use of symbolically important artefacts (imperial statues) and places, such as the gymnasium and theatre, and the Roman governor supported the anti-Judaean camp by publicly humiliating leading Judaeans by crucifying them, a punishment normally reserved for slaves and criminals.[49] Looting, plundering and lynching, on the other hand, have often been noted in

[46] See esp. S. Mason, 'Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History', *JSJ* 38 (2007) 457–512; S. Mason and P. Essler, 'Judaean and Christ-Follower Identities: Grounds for a Distinction', *NTS* 63 (2017) 493–515; B. Eckhardt, 'Rom und die Juden – ein Kategorienfehler? Zur römischen Sicht auf die Iudaei in später Republik und frühem Prinzipat', in G. Hasselhoff and M. Strothmann (eds.), *Religio licita? Rom und die Juden* (Berlin, 2017) 13–53.

[47] For possible explanations and speculations, see S. Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 CE and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction* (Leiden, 2009) 172–82.

[48] See also Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 130.

[49] For this gruesome way of execution, see now, with detailed bibliographies, J. G. Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 2019), and A. Merkt, 'Zügel der Herrschenden und Mahnmal der Schande: Das Kreuz als politisches und soziales Symbol', in J. Rahner and T. Söding (eds.), *Kirche und Welt – ein notwendiger Dialog* (Freiburg, 2019) 118–30.

pogroms and seem to be 'normal' epiphenomena of riots in general[50] – even occurring today in cities like London, Paris and Chicago.

Modern discussions regularly speak of 'antisemitic' rioting, as is also implied by the use of the term 'pogrom' for the events of AD 38.[51] Yet this characterisation transposes a modern term, which is the product of modern racism, into the world of early first-century Alexandria, which is not really helpful.[52] It seems better to think of ethnic distinctions in the city, which could become more important in times of trouble, as happened, for example, with Serbs and Croats as well as Hutus and Tutsis in the 1990s. Yet these distinctions could include religion as well, when the religion of the others was considered to be markedly different from one's own, as was apparently the case with the Judaeans, and this brings us to our final point here.

When we look at the course of events, we can see that religion played an important but hardly the most important part in this pogrom. The abolition of the legal and political rights of the Judaeans was a more central concern of the pogromists, but by the forced introduction of imperial statues and the occupation of the synagogues, the pogromists also struck at the heart of Judaean ethnicity, in which religion was embedded. It is obvious that the Greeks were fully conscious of the special place of the synagogues in the life of the Judaeans and Yahweh's prohibition of worshipping statues in the Ten Commandments. It shows that they were familiar with Judaean religion, but forced idolatry was only part of their pogrom, which seems to have been more political than religious. My third thesis therefore is: *we should avoid the term 'pogrom' for Antiquity, as it suggests a purely religious riot or massacre whereas reality was often much more complicated.*

[50] E.g. G. T. Marx, 'Issueless Riots', in J. F. Short and M. E. Wolfgang (eds.), *Collective Violence* (Chicago, 1972) 47–59; Bergmann, 'Pogrome', 455; S. Geissbühler, '"He Spoke Yiddish Like a Jew": Neighbors' Contribution to the Mass Killing of Jews in Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, July 1941', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28 (2014) 430–49.

[51] E.g. K. Goudriaan, 'Ethnical Strategies in Graeco-Roman Egypt', in P. Bilde et al. (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Aarhus, 1992) 74–99 at 86; R. Alston, 'Philo's *In Flaccum*: Ethnicity and Social Space in Roman Alexandria', *G&R* 44 (1997) 165–75 at 165; E. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA, 2002) index s.v., although regularly qualifying the term.

[52] As argued by J. J. Collins, 'Anti-Semitism in Antiquity? The Case of Alexandria', in C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in Its Hellenistic Context* (Leiden, 2005) 9–29 at 29 (repr. in Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture* [Leiden, 2005] 181–201 at 201): 'To speak of anti-semitism . . . is to fail to appreciate the contingent character of history'.

The Roman Persecutions

Let us now move to a seemingly clear case of religious violence: the persecutions of the Christians by the Roman authorities.[53] Clear, that is, in terms of what the average person might have thought. Yet in recent years various studies have appeared that have called the traditions about the persecutions a myth. The most challenging is a 2013 study by the New Testament and Patristic scholar Candida Moss called *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*.[54] Moss is moved by the fact that in the United States many people on the Christian right appeal to these early persecutions in order to complain about what they feel are persecutions today. Coming from Europe, one might think that Moss exaggerates, but a quick search on the web confirms that the rhetoric of persecution is indeed widespread.[55] Yet good intentions do not always make for good history. Can it be that so many generations of scholars have been wrong or are we dealing with one of those cases of postmodern scepticism that has gone over the top? And do we indeed have to relegate to the area of mythmaking the iconic pictures of Christian persecution, like those in the famous movie *Quo Vadis* (1951)?

Let me limit myself here again to three observations. First, on which grounds were the Christians actually arrested and executed? In the case of Nero, they were detained for, supposedly, arson, as Nero looked for scapegoats to blame for the Great Fire of 64.[56] Later Christians interpreted these arrests as the first persecution, but that was an interpretation in hindsight: at the time Christians were not executed for their beliefs but because they were the supposed arsonists of the fire. Yet, less than fifty years later we hear in a number of cases that Christians were condemned

[53] For stimulating reflections on the persecutions, see also D. Praet, 'Violence against Christians and Violence by Christians in the First Three Centuries: Direct Violence, Cultural Violence and the Debate about Christian Exclusiveness', in Geljon and Roukema, *Violence in Early Christianity*, 31–55.

[54] C. Moss, *The Myth of Persecution* (New York, 2013); B. Shaw, 'The Myth of the Neronian Persecution', *JRS* 105 (2015) 73–100.

[55] See e.g. https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/christian-persecution-not-just-happening-overseas-many-in-us-targeted-for-their-faith-too and http://theaquilareport.com/are-christians-in-america-persecuted/, but there are many more websites expressing a belief in being persecuted as a (usually Evangelical) Christian in the United States today.

[56] For the events after the Great Fire, see most recently Shaw, 'Myth', to be read with the critiques by C. P. Jones, 'The Historicity of the Neronian Persecution: A Response to Brent Shaw', *NTS* 63 (2017) 146–52, and B. van der Lans and J. N. Bremmer, 'Tacitus and the Persecution of the Christians: An Invention of Tradition?', *Eirene* 53 (2017) 299–331, unpersuasively countered by Shaw, 'Response to Christopher Jones: The Historicity of the Neronian Persecution', *NTS* 64 (2018) 231–42.

for the name, that is, for being Christian; we find this not only in the famous correspondence between Pliny and the Emperor Trajan,[57] but also in the more or less contemporaneous 1 Peter[58] and Hermas' *Shepherd*.[59] Yet, strangely enough, we cannot identify a specific imperial edict or measure that did condemn the Christians, although it is hard to imagine that there had never been any.[60]

Second, how early did persecutions start? A letter from the Church of Rome to that in Corinth, nowadays called *1 Clement*, which probably dates to about 120–25,[61] mentions that, after the executions of Peter and Paul, there 'have been added a great multitude of the chosen', who have set a superb example 'amongst us' by their suffering.[62] The feeling that there were many martyrs also appears in the *Dialogue with Trypho* of Justin Martyr, dating to the middle of the second century, where he says: 'though beheaded, crucified and thrown to wild beasts, and chains, and fire, and all other kinds of torture, we do not give up our confession'.[63] Not surprisingly, then, around 180, Irenaeus speaks of a 'multitude of martyrs in all times'.[64] Finally, around 200, Clement of Alexandria writes: 'with regard to us, every day we see with our own eyes abundant streams of martyrs who are burnt, impaled or beheaded',[65] and Tertullian's many references to martyrdom and flight to avoid it cannot be understood without a

[57] Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.96.2.

[58] 1 Peter 4:15–16. For this date, see D. G. Horrell, 'The Label Χριστιανός: 1 Peter 4:16 and the Formation of Christian Identity', *JBL* 126 (2007) 361–81 (repr. in his *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* [London, 2013] 164–210); O. Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 2010) 308–15.

[59] Hermas, *Visiones* 3.2.1, and *Similitudines* 9.28.3–4 (*SC* 53bis, pp. 102, 346–48). For the traditional date of Hermas, see A. Gregory, 'Disturbing Trajectories: *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd* of Hermas and the Development of Early Roman Christianity', in P. Oakes (ed.), *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (Carlisle, 2002) 142–66.

[60] T. Mayer-Maly, 'Der rechtsgeschichtliche Gehalt der "Christenbriefe" von Plinius und Trajan', *SDHI* 22 (1956) 311–28.

[61] Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom*, 245–331, and *Petrus und Paulus in Jerusalem und Rom* (Berlin, 2013) 89–104, 276–79, 285.

[62] Clement of Rome, *Epistula ad Corinthios prima* 6.1 (*SC* 167, p. 108).

[63] Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 110.4 (p. 478 Bobichon).

[64] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4.33.9 (*SC* 100, p. 820).

[65] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.125.2 (*SC* 38, p. 127). Cf. *Stromata* 4.28.4–5, 78.1–2 (*SC* 463, pp. 102, 184), 6.1.4, 167.4 (*SC* 446, pp. 58, 396), 7.1.1 (*SC* 428, p. 38), and *Paedagogus* 2.73.3 (*SC* 108, p. 146). For Clement, see A. van den Hoek, 'Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom', in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica XXVI* (Leuven, 1993) 324–41; G. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge, 1995) 65–71; P. Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity* (Edinburgh, 2006) 16–30; C. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom* (New Haven and London, 2012) 145–58.

background of persecutions.[66] This enumeration is based on people in all corners of the Roman empire: Gaul, Rome, Carthage and Alexandria. The geographical and chronological spread surely supports the idea of regular, albeit more local persecutions. Evidently, it is possible that these authors exaggerated, but with no basis in reality their rhetoric would not have worked. In fact, of the eleven pagan authors who comment on Christians in the long second century, ten mention their willingness to confess and die for their faith.[67] Given the just mentioned tendency of some modern scholars to dispute the reality of the persecutions, this evidence is an important argument to the contrary.

Unfortunately, we never hear how the arrests came about. The acts of the Christian martyrs are not interested in the history leading up to the martyrdoms, usually starting with the fact of the arrest: 'In the days of the wicked decrees of idolatry, the aforementioned saints [that is, the saints of the title of the acts] were arrested and brought before the urban prefect of Rome, Rusticus', thus the beginning of the *Acts of Justin*.[68] And in the famous *Passion of Perpetua* we read just that 'Arrest was made in the town of Thuburbo Minus of the young catechumens'.[69] It is only in one early case where we hear of a jealous husband denouncing the Christian teacher of his wife.[70] Indeed, the early modern witchcraft persecutions of around AD 1500 have taught us that such persecutions were often used to settle personal scores, but that is all we can say.

Third, it is very difficult to quantify the number of victims. Yet many scholars have ventured a guess in this respect, and it is fairly easy to forecast the outcome of that guess. The less a scholar is a believer, the fewer victims he or she claims, the more a believer the more victims. I am a liberal Protestant and so I keep to the middle. Undoubtedly, there were not thousands of victims because the Roman state simply did not have the

[66] H. Hoppenbrouwers, *Recherches sur la terminologie du martyre de Tertullien à Lactance* (Nijmegen, 1961) 5–7. For flight, see O. Nicolson, 'Flight in Persecution as Imitation of Christ: Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* IV,18,1–2', *JThS* NS 40 (1989) 48–65; J. Leemans, 'The Idea of "Flight from Persecution" in the Alexandrian Tradition from Clement to Athanasius', in L. Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition* (Leuven, 2004) 901–10.

[67] As noted by J. Engberg, 'Martyrdom and Persecution: Pagan Perspectives on the Prosecution and Execution of Christians *c.*110–210 AD', in J. Engberg et al. (eds.), *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom* (Frankfurt, 2011) 93–117 at 96–97.

[68] *Acta Justini* (A) 1 (p. 42 Musurillo, with trans. at p. 43, slightly modified).

[69] *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 2.1 (p. 25 Farrell and Williams); trans. J. Farrell and C. Williams, 'The Passion of Saints Pepertua and Felicity', in J. N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (eds.), *Pepertua's Passions* (Oxford, 2012) 14–23 at 15.

[70] Justin Martyr, *Apologia* 2.2 (*SC* 507, pp. 320–26), quoted by Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.17.2–13 (*GCS* NF 6.1, pp. 358–62).

infrastructure for such numbers. Moreover, Trajan had explicitly forbidden that people could be secretly denounced. So the earlier persecutions were always somewhat haphazard, and living in the right place one might never be bothered by the Roman authorities. Yet just as somebody nowadays walking on a bridge in London or sitting on a terrace in Paris may wonder about the possibility of an Islamic State attack, so many Christians must have wondered about their safety. My fourth thesis is: *even local, sporadic persecutions should not be underestimated with regard to their psychological impact*.

The situation of local and sporadic persecutions changed dramatically in AD 249/50, when the Emperor Decius issued an edict obliging everybody to sacrifice to the gods. In one stroke, the emperor now made sacrifice not a sign of belonging to a local group of worshippers that pleasantly dines together afterwards, but a sign of belonging to the universal group of Roman subjects. Interestingly, the role of sacrifice now became symbolic of Romanness in addition to being religious, and the example of Decius would be followed by all the persecuting emperors until Constantine.[71] Moreover, people had to sign a certificate of compliance with this order, of which several have been preserved on papyrus. The reason for this general edict remains disputed, and it is not wholly impossible that Decius followed Persia in trying to introduce religious uniformity.[72] For us it is important to observe that we now see the Roman state using all its power to enforce a certain kind of religious uniformity. The scale and nature of

[71] See, most recently, J. Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *JRS* 89 (1999) 135–54. See also Y. Duval, 'Le début de la persécution de Dèce à Rome', *REAug* 46 (2000) 157–72; R. Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt, 2004); G. Clarke, 'Third-Century Christianity', in A. Bowman, A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume XII: The Crisis of Empire, AD 193–337* (Cambridge, 2005) 589–671 at 625–35; B. Bleckmann, 'Zu den Motiven der Christenverfolgung des Decius', in K.-P. Johne (ed.), *Deleto paene imperio Romano: Transformationsprozesse des Römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert und ihre Rezeption in der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2006) 37–56; A. Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord* (Cambridge, MA, 2008) 157–74; K. Pietzner, 'Die Christen', in K.-P. Johne (ed.), *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser: Krise und Transformation des Römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (235–284)*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 2008) 973–1007 at 994–99; A. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge, 2010) 117–249; E. Manders, 'Communicating Messages through Coins: A New Approach to the Emperor Decius', *Jaarboek voor Munt- en Penningkunde* 98 (2011) 17–38; R. Mentxaka, *El edicto de Decio y su aplicación en Cartago con base en la correspondencia de Cipriano* (Santiago de Compostela, 2014); P. Schubert, 'On the Form and Content of the Certificates of Pagan Sacrifice', *JRS* 106 (2016) 172–98; and Rives, this volume, pp. 187–90.

[72] As argued in an interesting article by P. McKechnie, 'Roman Law and the Laws of the Medes and Persians: Decius' and Valerian's Persecutions of Christianity', in P. McKechnie (ed.), *Thinking Like a Lawyer: Essays on Legal History and General History for John Crook on His Eightieth Birthday* (Leiden, 2002) 253–69.

the religious violence had changed, although not so much the nature of the violence itself.

Yet we still find a remarkable reticence of the Roman state to execute. Less than a decade later, the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus issued a similar edict. Once again, Christians are not mentioned as the prime target, but the emperors must have known from Decius' experience what the outcome would be. But even so, there is no idea that all Christians need to be executed. Take the example of Bishop Cyprian of Carthage:

> [The judge] read the decision from a tablet: 'It is decided that Tascius Cyprian should die by the sword'. Cyprian the bishop said: 'Thanks be to God'. After his sentence the community of brothers said: 'Let us be beheaded with him'.[73]

One would have thought this an excellent chance for the government to get rid of the other Christians too, but nobody was arrested, let alone executed – only Cyprian.

The situation changed with the persecution by Diocletian.[74] The facts are well known. On 23 February 303, the emperor issued an edict that deprived Christians of any offices and ranks; subsequent edicts ordered the arrest of clerics, denied them access to the courts and commanded everyone to perform religious sacrifices. Papyri show that during this persecution the powerful presence of the Roman government was felt all the way from the Alexandrian court room – in this city alone 642 martyrs and their Bishop Peter died, according to a new Ethiopic text published recently[75] – to the remote corners of the Egyptian countryside, as will have been the case elsewhere in the empire: no myth of persecution here! But it was not only that the Diocletian persecution seems to have been more dramatic because of its numbers; it also was crueller than the Christians had seen before. Until Diocletian, the executions had mostly consisted of

[73] *Passio Cypriani* 3.6–4.1 (p. 242 Rebillard).

[74] See most recently K.-H. Schwarte, 'Diokletians Christengesetz', in R. Günther and S. Rebenich (eds.), *E fontibus haurire: Beiträge zur römischen Geschichte und zu ihren Hilfswissenschaften* (Paderborn, 1994) 203–40, with W. A. Löhr, 'Some Observations on Karl-Heinz Schwarte's "Diokletian's Christengesetz"', *VChr* 56 (2002) 75–95; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, 'Aspects of the "Great" Persecution', repr. and updated in his *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Oxford, 2006) 35–78; V. Twomey and M. Humphries (eds.), *The Great Persecution* (Dublin and Portland, 2009); E. DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, 2012); and Rives, pp. 200–201, and Chapter 8 by Manders, both this volume.

[75] A. Bausi and A. Camplani, 'The *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria (HEpA)*: *Editio minor* of the Fragments Preserved in the *Aksumite Collection* and in the *Codex Veronensis* LX (58)', *Adamantius* 22 (2016) 249–302 at 275 (§ 23).

beheading, burning at the stake or being thrown to the animals. Now torture was added, and combing the sides with iron combs or letting martyrs roast on gridirons became a familiar sight. It is this aspect of quantity and cruelty that caused these persecutions to be remembered more vividly than the older ones. Moreover, this cruelty also seems to have influenced the later, fictional martyr reports, the so-called 'epic passions', which like to show the Roman authorities gloating over the torture inflicted on the Christians.

These cruelties did not mean that all judges were like that or that Christians could never escape. On the contrary. Eusebius' account of the executions of his own friends and acquaintances in Palestine regularly shows Christians looking for martyrdom or provoking it, but others were more careful. Papyri and canons suggest that Christians in Egypt, and presumably therefore also elsewhere, could negotiate the imperial measures by pretending to be illiterate, by bribing the authorities, by sending friends to sacrifice on their behalf, or even by sending their Christian slaves – which does not seem a very Christian thing to do.[76] Yet, when all is said and done, the facts of a cruel persecution in the east of the empire are hard to refute.

Rather amazingly, after these persecutions we have virtually no more cases of direct violence either by the Christian emperors or by Julian the Apostate.[77] It is as if the last cruelties had demonstrated the inefficiency of the persecutions. From now on, with just a few exceptions, we only have cultural violence and hardly any more direct violence. It is important to distinguish between the two. Thus, my fifth thesis is: *speaking about persecutions without distinguishing between cultural and direct violence is distorting the historical reality*.

Christian Cultural Violence: The Case of Gaza

But what about the religious violence by the Christians themselves in Late Antiquity? Let us conclude by looking once again at a famous case of temple destruction, which has repeatedly been discussed but which still raises a number of questions: the famous destruction of the temple of the

[76] Cf. A. Luijendijk, 'Papyri from the Great Persecution: Roman and Christian Perspectives', *JECS* 16 (2008) 341–69.

[77] For Julian's policy towards the Christians, see most recently H. C. Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War against Christianity* (Oxford, 2017).

god Marnas in Gaza.[78] Fortunately, we have a long account of it in the so-called *Life of Porphyry* by Mark the Deacon, which has been properly edited only by Anna Lampadaridi in 2016.[79] The relevant part of the *Life* starts with the arrival of Bishop Porphyry in Maiouma, the Christian port of Gaza. From here the bishop went in procession to Gaza itself (58), where, on seeing the sign of the cross, a demon immediately left a famous statue of Aphrodite, which broke in pieces, killing two idolaters standing nearby (61). When troops of the emperor arrived to assist the bishop under the command of Cynegius, many of the pagans, especially the wealthy ones, left the town. Interestingly, it is the elite, not the poor, who are seen as pagans.[80] The Christians, who were clearly a minority in Gaza at that time, now directed their attention to the temples, of which there were eight according to Mark (64), the temple of the city god Marnas, the Marneion, included. However, other evidence confirms at most five of them;[81] those of Hecate and Kore may well owe their virtual place to their infernal associations.

The priests of the Marneion, though, blocked the entrance and hid the precious vases and statues of gods in the *adyton*, the inner shrine. It is interesting to note this hiding of statues, as we know from archaeological records that elsewhere too pagans did indeed sometimes hide statues of gods to prevent them from being smashed or mutilated.[82] Given the defence of the Marneion, the Christians first destroyed the other temples, which took them ten days. Then they reflected on what to do with the Marneion. After a fast, they celebrated the holy liturgy, when a seven-year-old boy who had accompanied his mother – an interesting illustration of

[78] For the god, see G. Mussies, 'Marnas, God of Gaza', in *ANRW* II.18.4 (1990) 2412–57; N. Belayche, *Iudaea-Palaestina: The Pagan Cults in Roman Palestine (Second to Fourth Century)* (Tübingen, 2001) 235–47; E. Lipiński, 'Marna and Maiuma', *Latomus* 72 (2013) 919–38; in general, most recently, C. Rapp, 'Contested Ground in Gaza: The Narrative of Triumphalist Christianity', in J. Tolan (ed.), *Geneses: A Comparative Study of the Historiographies of the Rise of Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and Islam* (London and New York, 2019) 87–97.

[79] A. Lampadaridi, *La conversion de Gaza au christianisme: la Vie de S. Porphyre* (Brussels, 2016). The numbers in the text refer to the chapters of the work.

[80] See also R. Van Dam, 'From Paganism to Christianity at Late Antique Gaza', *Viator* 16 (1985) 1–20.

[81] Belayche, *Iudaea-Palaestina*, 247–49; P. Chuvin, 'Christianisation et résistance des cultes traditionnels: approches actuelles et enjeux historiographiques', in M. Narcy and É. Rebillard (eds.), *Hellénisme et christianisme* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2004) 15–34 at 25–26, who believes in the authenticity, up to a point, of Mark the Deacon's account because of his description of the conversion of a Manichaean missionary. Admitting that the description shows some knowledge of the Manichaeans, one must also observe that their conversion equally occurs in Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 13 (p. 23 Schwartz).

[82] See esp. Y. Le Bohec, 'Les maisons de la cachette', in M.-F. Baslez (ed.), *Chrétiens persécuteurs: destructions, exclusions, violences religieuses au IV^e siècle* (Paris, 2014) 395–402.

the informal religious education of the Christians – cried out: '"Burn the inner temple to the ground, as many terrible things have happened in it, especially human sacrifices. Burn it in this manner: bring raw pitch, sulphur and pork fat, and mix the three and apply it to the bronze doors and set it on fire" . . . This he said in the language of the Syrians'. (66) The idea of a boy as a medium of God's word may seem strange to us, but there is much evidence that boys, and also girls, were used as mediums in Late Antiquity, and our case seems to be a Christian version of this phenomenon.[83]

At first, the bishop mistrusted the boy, but he repeated his words in Greek, although his mother assured the bishop that he could speak only Syriac. At last the bishop believed the boy (68), and the Christians set the temple on fire. Only soldiers and strangers plundered it, not the Christians (69): there clearly should not be any suspicion of Christian greed here, only religious reasons for the destruction. The temple burned for several days (70), and subsequently the houses of the wealthy were investigated and many statues destroyed. Even books about magic, the so-called grimoires, were found and delivered to the fire (71).[84] As a result, understandably, a number of people converted, and they were accepted by the bishop despite some protests by Christian hardliners (72–73), but they had to follow religious instruction for some days, even after their baptism (74). Subsequently, the bishop started the building of a new church on the very spot of the Marneion, leading the Christians from their old church dedicated to St. Irene in procession to the new one (77), which took about five years to build after a design by the Empress Eudoxia, who died in 404 (78, 84, 92).

Unlike what most earlier scholars have thought, there can be no doubt that this detailed account was written long after the events it purports to describe, certainly after AD 556, as the author was demonstrably acquainted with monastic biographies that were written in the middle of the sixth century, especially the *Vita Euthymii* by Cyril of Scythopolis.[85]

[83] T. Hopfner, 'Die Kindermedien in den griechisch-aegyptischen Zauberpapyri', in *Recueil d'études dédiées à la mémoire de N. P. Kondakov* (Prague, 1926) 65–74; S. I. Johnston, 'Charming Children: The Use of the Child in Ancient Divination', *Arethusa* 34 (2001) 97–117.

[84] This passage has to be added to those discussed in my 'From Books with Magic to Magical Books in Ancient Greece and Rome', in D. Boschung and J. N. Bremmer (eds.), *The Materiality of Magic* (Munich, 2015) 241–69; see now also J. A. Howley, 'Book-Burning and the Uses of Writing in Ancient Rome: Destructive Practice between Literature and Document', *JRS* 107 (2017) 1–24.

[85] Lampadaridi, *Conversion de Gaza*, 17–19, whose dating fits that of T. D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen, 2010) 275, with an additional argument. Strangely, Lampadaridi does not discuss Barnes' analysis, even though she quotes the book in her bibliography.

It fits this conclusion that the notice about Porphyry's death (103) follows the style of local grave stones and seems to have been copied from one of them,[86] just as was done by other hagiographical authors, most famously by the author of the fictitious *Life of Abercius*.[87] In fact, no Gazean bishop Porphyry is known, nor is a church called Eudoxiana. The long digression about the boy is obviously fictitious and also fits the chronological distance. Yet the account is not wholly without historical facts, as its location of the destruction of the Marneion in the early 400s is supported by Jerome.[88] The commander Cynegius had been responsible for the destruction of temples in Syria and Egypt, but he had already died in 388, long before the destruction of the Marneion.[89] The author, then, had some historical knowledge, and we cannot exclude an oral tradition that remembered the time of the destruction of this great pagan sanctuary. Moreover, the account reflects the important position of the bishop in Late Antique Gaza,[90] although bishops were credited with destructions of temples also in other accounts.[91] The Christian rejection of ancient statuary as evidenced in our account also fits the sixth century much better than the previous century, when Christians had been more moderate in this respect, in both East and West;[92] in fact, some Byzantine Christians even collected

[86] This was noted already by C. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine, 1873–1874*, vol. 2 (London, 1896) 410 (no. 13); see also C. Glucker, *The City of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Oxford, 1987) 120–35 (nos. 4–20); A. Busine, 'From Stones to Myth: Temple Destruction and Civic Identity in the Late Antique Roman East', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6 (2013) 325–46 at 339.

[87] P. J. Thonemann, 'Abercius of Hierapolis: Christianisation and Social Memory in Late Antique Asia Minor', in B. Dignas and R. R. R. Smith (eds.), *Historical and Religious Memory in the Ancient World* (Oxford, 2012) 257–82, and 'The Martyrdom of Ariadne of Prymnessos and an Inscription from Perge', *Chiron* 45 (2015) 149–68. For Abercius, see now esp. M. Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity: From Reception to Retrospection* (London and New York, 2019) 77–161.

[88] Jerome, *Commentaria in Isaiam* 7.17 (*PL* 24, col. 249).

[89] On Maternus Cynegius, see most recently J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (Berlin, 2004) 79–83; M. V. E. Paño, 'Maternus Cynegius, un hispano en la corte teodosiana', in A. F. Caballos Rufino (ed.), *Del municipio a la corte: la renovación de las elites romanas* (Seville, 2012) 311–32; S. Olszaniec, *Prosopographical Studies on the Court Elite in the Roman Empire (4th Century AD)* (Toruń, 2013) 97–119. Destructions in Syria: Libanius, *Oration* 30; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.21.7 (*GCS* NF 5, p. 319). Egypt: *Descriptio consulum* s.a. 388 (p. 242 Burgess); Zosimus 4.37.3.

[90] C. Saliou, 'Gaza dans l'Antiquité tardive' and 'Le monachisme gaziote', in M.-A. Haldimann et al. (eds.), *Gaza à la croisée des civilisations* (Neuchâtel, 2007) 141–70.

[91] Cf. B. Caseau, 'Πολεμεῖν λίθοις: la désacralisation des espaces et des objets religieux païens durant l'Antiquité tardive', in M. Kaplan (ed.), *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident: études comparées* (Paris, 2001) 61–123; Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*; C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2005).

[92] East: I. Jacobs, 'From Production to Destruction? Pagan Statuary in Late Antique Asia Minor', *AJA* 114 (2010) 267–303; B. Caseau, 'Religious Intolerance and Pagan Statuary', in L. Lavan and

pagan statues.[93] Yet even if largely fictitious, the account still reflects one truth, which is my sixth thesis: *the Christians directed their violence against pagan temples and statues, whereas the Romans directed their violence against Christian books, churches and people*.

Conclusion

Looking back across the evidence presented in this chapter, we can see a development in religious violence. Ancient Athens was a fairly tolerant community regarding religious innovations and criticisms. Accusations had to come from the bottom up and then were discussed by a representative body of male citizens, which rarely voted for capital punishment. In Rome, too, with a few exceptions, religious violence was rare and in the beginning of the empire was applied via exile and expulsion rather than executions. In the case of the Judaeans in Alexandria, on the other hand, we have a clear case of a collision between two religions, likely caused by political circumstances. It is only in the later Roman empire that we see the imperial administration commencing persecutions, sometimes top down, as for example in the case of Septimius Severus,[94] and sometimes bottom up, with people denouncing Christians but, beginning with Diocletian, involving all the might of the state at that time. It is only with Constantine and Julian the Apostate, who tried to prohibit Christian teachers from teaching the standard classical authors, that the persecutions became limited to cultural violence, such as the closing of temples and the

M. Mulryan (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden, 2011) 479–502; B. Caseau, 'Le sort de la statuaire antique à la fin de l'Antiquité', *Technè* 40 (2014) 106–13; I. Jacobs, 'Old Habits Die Hard: A Group of Mythological Statuettes from Sagalassos and the Afterlife of Sculpture in Asia Minor', in T. M. Kristensen and L. M. Stirling (eds.), *The Afterlife of Classical Sculpture: Late Antique Responses and Practices* (Ann Arbor, 2016) 93–117. West: A. Leone, *The End of the Pagan City: Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in Late Antique North Africa* (Oxford, 2013) 122–88; É. Rebillard, *Transformations of Religious Practices in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2014) 73–87; G. de Bruyn, 'Briser les idoles païennes ou les sauvegarder? Le sort des statues divines de Caesarea (Cherchel, Algérie) à la fin de l'Antiquité', *RH* 677 (2016) 3–25.

[93] H. Saradi-Mendelovici, 'Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries', *DOP* 44 (1990) 47–61; C. Mango, M. Vickers and E. D. Francis, 'The Palace of Lausus at Constantinople and Its Collection of Ancient Statues', *Journal of the History of Collections* 4 (1992) 89–98; S. Bassett, '"Excellent Offerings": The Lausos Collection in Constantinople', *ABull* 82 (2000) 6–25; M. M. Miles, *Art as Plunder. The Ancient Origins of Debate about Cultural Property* (Cambridge, 2008) 282–84.

[94] P. Keresztes, 'The Emperor Septimius Severus: A Precursor of Decius', *Historia* 19 (1970) 564–78 at 570; A. Alcock, 'Persecution under Septimius Severus', *Enchoria* 11 (1982) 1–5 (papyrus re-edited by H.-M. Schenke, 'Bemerkungen zum P. Hamb. Bil. 1 und zum altfayumischen Dialekt der koptischen Sprache', *Enchoria* 18 [1991] 69–93 at 86–88); A. Daguet-Gagey, 'Septime Sévère, un empereur persécuteur des chrétiens?', *REAug* 47 (2001) 3–32.

prohibition of sacrifice. Not that we should belittle those measures, but they are different in character, as we have seen, from the earlier persecutions, even though one Christian Church historian has already called Julian's measure a 'persecution'![95] In Late Antiquity, though, we see a new power arising, the bishop, who was sometimes more of an activist than the Christian emperor or governor.[96] In short, we see in the course of Antiquity an increasing role for the state, even though in Late Antiquity bishops sometimes play an important role as well. Moreover, it is especially Christian authors that stress the role of the bishop.

Yet the bishops' role raises again the question I started with: should we speak of religious violence or of a connection between violence and religion? In a number of cases we have seen that to consider the case purely a religious one is misleading. In the case of Socrates, political motives seem to have been important, whereas in the case of Phryne social ones may have played a prime role. In the Alexandrian 'pogrom' politics proved to be difficult to separate from religious aspects, and in the case of the general Roman persecutions political motives certainly seem to have been present if not paramount. In the case of Christian cultural violence, religion seems to have been important, especially in the case of the destruction of statues as idolatry, but the incidental nature of these cases of violence should make us wonder about the motives behind these actions and their actors. In the end, it may well be the presence in our day of a violent section of Islam as well as many ancient historians' strongly secularised point of view that makes us see certain cases of violence as especially religious.[97] However, this does not mean that we should wholly disaggregate religion and violence either.[98] Without essentialising we can

[95] Cf. Teitler, *Last Pagan Emperor*, 65.

[96] For the rise of the bishop, see most recently R. Haensch, 'Die Rolle der Bischöfe im 4. Jahrhundert: Neue Anforderungen und neue Antworten', *Chiron* 37 (2007) 153–81; K. M. Girardet, '*Imperium* und *sacerdotium*: Politische und ideologische Folgen der Konstantinischen Wende', in his *Studien zur Alten Geschichte der Europäer* (Bonn, 2015) 531–61; H. Leppin, 'Zu den Anfängen der Bischofsbestellung', in A. Fahrmeir (ed.), *Personalentscheidungen für gesellschaftliche Schlüsselpositionen: Institutionen, Semantiken, Praktiken* (Berlin, 2017) 33–53.

[97] See also the stimulating reflections of H. Leppin, 'Christianity and the Discovery of Religious Freedom', *Journal of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History 22* (2014) 62–78, and P. Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance durant l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2018). For the recent tendency in Religious Studies to speak of 'religion and violence' in order to avoid the assumption that religion is the cause of violence, see the General Introduction, p. 4, and Kippenberg, pp. 18–19, both this volume.

[98] As advocated by Bendlin in Chapter 6, this volume.

still observe that certain sections of polytheist and monotheist religions, in Antiquity and today, adduce religion as an important factor in their actions.[99] In any case, as I hope to have shown – and this is my seventh and last thesis – *in Antiquity not all religious violence was that religious and not all religious violence that violent*.

[99] See also Mayer, this volume, pp. 257–58, with a well-balanced argument in this respect.

PART II

Religious Violence in the Graeco-Roman World

CHAPTER 3

*Ancient Greek Binding Spells and (Political) Violence**

Esther Eidinow

Introduction: Cultures of Terror

As the anthropologist Michael Taussig argued, in discussion of Roger Casement's Putumayo report, 'To an important extent all societies live by fictions taken as reality'.[1] His was a paper that explored 'the mediation of the culture of terror through narration',[2] exploring specifically how everyday narratives of different kinds are woven together to create the mundane reality of violent ideologies. In this chapter, I will follow his lead by tracing the evidence for a culture of terror in ancient Greek, especially Athenian, society, as expressed in specific fragmentary narratives of magic and law, or, more specifically, of legal and magical violence. My argument will focus on the violence against the individual depicted in binding spells (or *katadesmoi*), examining the cultural significance of the spectacle of the body depicted in parts.[3] I will be focusing, where possible, on spells found in Attica, using further material, including literary, archaeological and visual evidence, that sets it in its socio-political context.[4]

* I am grateful to the organisers of the very stimulating conference on religious violence in Antiquity, Jitse Dijkstra and Christian Raschle, and to the conference participants for their discussion. An earlier version of this chapter was delivered at the UK Classical Association Conference on 27 April 2017 in a panel on 'Narrating the Body', and I want to thank my co-organiser of that panel (Georgia Petridou) and the discussants for their helpful comments.

[1] M. Taussig, 'Culture of Terror, Space of Death: Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984) 467–97 at 492.

[2] Ibid., 467.

[3] I am taking for granted in this chapter that these 'magical' texts may be considered under the larger category 'religious', insofar as the line between the two activities of magic and religion (using these terms etically) is a matter of subjective judgement at this time. On this subject, see E. Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2013) 13–16.

[4] That said, I have argued elsewhere (see E. Eidinow, 'Why the Athenians Began to Curse', in R. Osborne [ed.], *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution: Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Politics, 430-380 BC* [Cambridge, 2007] 44–71) that spells found further afield (for example SGD 176 discussed in this chapter) may have been influenced by Attic practices of spell creation.

By means of this inquiry, I will argue that these magical/religious texts should be considered primarily as political instruments that treated the body of the individual as a site of potential domination.[5] In so doing I want to suggest that we reconsider the idea that *katadesmoi* were fundamentally a practice of competitive contexts, as scholars have argued. While understandable as an interpretation of many of the later texts, the material record indicates that the earlier use of these spells – that is, up until the imperial period – was not primarily intended for the most obviously competitive settings, such as sporting or theatrical *agones*. Rather, these spells tend to appear in what we might call political settings, such as the law courts, or, indeed, in what may appear to be situations simply of hostility.[6]

Working with Foucault's theories of 'subjectivation', and drawing on Bakhtin's examination of the conceptual power of the grotesque body, I will argue that these spells both expressed and helped to create a conception of the individual as a political actor, that is, as subject to the law of the *polis*. And thus, returning to Michael Taussig's insight above, I aim to show how, through their violence, these spell texts drew on and reinforced the ideologies of the *polis*.

Current Approaches

The focus of study of this chapter is binding spells that date to the late classical or Hellenistic period. The majority of these spells under examination here are Athenian, although the find-spots of some are unknown. I am particularly interested in a type of repetitive formula found in these texts: the binding of the hands, feet, tongue, and so on of the target. The following text provides a useful example:

> I bind Litias in the presence of Hermes the Binder, and Persephone, the tongue of Litias, the hands of Litias, the soul of Litias, the feet of Litias, the body of Litias, the head of Litias. I bind Nikias, the hands of the Areopagite, in the presence of Hermes the Binder, the hands, feet, the tongue, the body of Nikias. I bind Demetrios in the presence of Hermes the Binder, the body, the work of Demetrios the potter, the hands, the feet, the soul. I bind Epicharinon in the presence of Hermes the Binder. I bind Demades, the

[5] Cf. Chapter 14 by De Wet, this volume, for the domination of the body in a different time and context, Late Antique asceticism.

[6] For further details on this argument, see Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*. This chapter also builds on more recent discussions of the imagery of binding spells in E. Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death: Women on Trial in Classical Athens* (Oxford, 2016). For the *asebeia* trials in classical Athens, see in addition to this work, Bremmer, this volume, pp. 48–52.

> potter in the presence of Hermes the Binder. The body, the work, the soul. I bind Daphnis I bind in the presence of Hermes the Binder. I bind Philonides in the presence of Hermes the Binder. I bind Simale Piste, I bind in the presence of Hermes the Binder. I bind Litias, the feet, the hands, the soul, and the body of Litias, the tongue of Litias, the plan of Litias, which he is working on, in the presence of Hermes the Binder and Persephone and Hades.[7]

First, a few remarks about how these spells and this formula have been analysed in scholarship. In general, there have been attempts to assign these spells to particular social categories, and argue that they were concerned with competition.[8] However, as I have argued elsewhere, a number of those spells that date to the pre-imperial period are ambiguous in this regard.[9] These include, for example, spells that have been categorised as concerned with commercial competition, but which address a puzzling range of (many) other types of profession, or other areas of life, too many for this to be their (only) motive. In the example that follows, I have put the different professions and indications of gender in the text in bold, and underlined the different social spheres of activity, to illustrate this point:

> Phileas **the miller**, hands, feet, tongue, speech . . . hands, feet and work, the memory, hands and feet and workshop. Phyllida . . . the workshop . . . **woman**, hands, feet, tongue and . . . Parthenios **the (f.) innkeeper**, hands, feet. Lyde the workshop . . . Nausiporos, hands, feet, all those living together, all the household . . . **tart** . . . hands and feet and workshop and everything in the workshop . . . backwards . . . hands, feet, workshop and everything in the workshop. Lydos **the boxer**, and hands and feet . . . **witnesses** . . . workshop . . . hands and feet . . . and . . . **innkeeper** (m.) . . . hands, feet, workshop, **the innkeeper**, feet, hands, feet, workshop and everything in the workshop . . . Areokousa **the pimp**, hands, feet . . .[10]

Certain of the spells categorised by modern scholars as judicial offer another example of texts that do not neatly fit this rubric. They have been described as agonistic, insofar as they were clearly intended as an attack on

[7] SGD 44. Abbreviations used in this chapter (numbers refer to catalogue items not pages):
DTA: R. Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae* (Berlin, 1897).
DT: A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris, 1904).
SGD: D. Jordan, 'A Survey of Greek Defixiones not Included in the Special Corpora', *GRBS* 26 (1985) 151–97.
NGCT: D. Jordan, 'New Greek Curse Tablets (1985–2000)', *GRBS* 41 (2000) 5–46.

[8] E.g. C. Faraone, 'The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells', in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford, 1991) 3–32.

[9] E. Eidinow, 'Binding Spells and the Management of Risk', in M. Piranomonte and F. M. Simón (eds.), *Contesti magici / Contextos magicos: atti del convegno internazionale* (Rome, 2012) 1–9.

[10] *DTA* 68.

rivals in the courtroom. However, a number of these texts also list targets other than their opposing litigants, including, for example, 'those standing around in the courtroom' and even the *dikastai* themselves. In addition, in some of these texts, we also find women listed – suggesting that the remit of these spells is broader than those with whom the spell author was in direct competition. To give some examples:

> . . . Kallias . . . of Euktemon, Charias, Kallias . . . against you . . . Kallias, Hipponikos : Hippoloches, witnesses of Kallias or judges . . . Kallias, of the least . . . The in-laws of Noumenios, co-speakers and Kallias. Charias . . . let them be mindless. Ameinias . . . Kallias (witnesses) Kallias, Kallias, of Kallias.[11]

> Menetratos, Kallippos, Herakleides, Leodamas, Herotodos, and those who are co-speakers and stand around.[12]

> Ariphrades, Kleophon, Archedamos, Polyxenos, Antikrates, Antiphanes, Zakoros, Antichares, Satyra, Mika, Simon. The mother of Satira, Theodora . . . Antamis, Eukoline, Ameinias, and all their co-litigants/co-prosecutors and friends.[13]

The categories into which scholars allocate these spells may also be ambiguous. For example, consider how the spell below crosses the categorical boundaries: is it concerned with the professional aspects of its victim's life, or her love life?[14]

> I bind Theodora in the presence of the one beside Persephone and the unfulfilled dead. May she be unfulfilled both whatever she is about to discuss with Kallias and whatever she is about to discuss with Charias and her deeds and words and business . . . Words, talk that, at any time, she may say. I bind Theodora to be unfulfilled with regard to Charias and Charias to forget Theodora and Charias to forget the child of Theodora and the bed (sex) with Theodora.[15]

These examples suggest that a theory of competition, and some attempts to categorise these texts, may not be sufficient – indeed, may limit our capacity – to evoke, explore and better understand the multiplicity of motivations that prompted the writing of these types of texts. Elsewhere, drawing on theories developed by the anthropologist Mary Douglas, I have

[11] *DTA* 65. [12] SGD 176. [13] *DTA* 39.

[14] This text has prompted a variety of interpretations, e.g. J. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1992) 90 thinks Theodora and Charias are lovers; C. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA, 1999) 86 (n. 182) seems to suggest that this spell was created in the context of (risks to) a marriage; M. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (Abingdon, 2001) 576 suggests that this was written by a 'courtesan jealous of her trade'.

[15] *DT* 68, side A.

argued instead that these texts are indicative of socially constructed conceptions of risk: that is, that the topics and activities on which these texts focus indicate the areas of daily life that the culture which created them had identified as particularly dangerous.[16] In what follows, I want to build on these arguments to suggest how and why those conceptions of risk were connected with broader cultural conceptions of blame, accountability and responsibility, and, specifically, to examine how the individual's understanding and acceptance of these ideas – as evinced in these texts – helped to support and maintain the values and institutions of their culture.

Before I move on, there are two other approaches to these texts that I will raise as apposite to the argument I will make below. The first concerns the listing of body parts found in these texts. Henk Versnel has argued that this listing alluded only to a very general idea of disabling the opponent of the text's creator – it was not actually intended to harm them. He has asserted: 'all these formulas can be qualified as functional and instrumental in that they can be understood as instruments to bind – that is to restrain – competitors without the explicit, and perhaps even implicit, aim of physically hurting or tormenting them'.[17] In what follows, I want to challenge this idea, and argue instead that the aim behind these spells was more focused and more serious than that statement indicates.

And this introduces a second argument that I want to explore, which concerns the emotional impact of these texts on their author (by which I mean the individual for whom the spell was created, whether he or she wrote it him- or herself or not). It has been posited that if these texts were commissioned, then that process would not have been spontaneous enough to ameliorate the emotional distress of the individual who instigated the spell.[18] However, more usually, and from early in the history of their study, scholars have written about the ways in which these texts were 'capable of affording relief to surcharged emotion'.[19] This assertion

[16] Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 22–25. Cultural constructions of risk in M. Douglas, *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory* (London, 1992).

[17] See H. S. Versnel. 'Καὶ εἴ τι λ[οιπὸν] τῶν μερ[ῶ]ν [ἔσ]ται τοῦ σῶματος ὅλ[ο]υ [. . (. . . and Any Other Part of the Entire Body There May Be . . .): An Essay on Anatomical Curses', in F. Graf (ed), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (Leipzig, 1998) 217–67 at 222–23.

[18] As argued by F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA, 1997) 146–47; he does argue later in the book (p. 157) that these texts offered one way 'to master emotionally an otherwise difficult crisis', but offers no further details of his interpretation of how or why that process occurred.

[19] R. R. Marett, 'From Spell to Prayer', *FolkLore* 15 (1904) 132–65 at 143 (repr. in his *The Threshold of Religion*, 2nd ed. [London, 1914]) 29–72 at 43). See discussion in E. Eidinow, 'Ancient Greco-Roman Magic and the Agency of Victimhood', *Numen* 64 (2017) 394–417.

commonly rests on the argument that the texts were intended to cause some harm or restraint to the target, and it was (simply) this that provided psychological release to the person who wrote or commissioned the text. While accepting this as a basic premise, one of my aims in this chapter will be to set this idea in a broader social context and ask how this sense of release was achieved.

A Body in Parts

Building on the quotation from Taussig with which I began, and the idea that everyday narratives are constructive forces in the creation of culture, I want to turn first to the individual agency of the authors and targets of these spells. I have suggested above that the ambiguous nature of the spells may signal an environment in which hostilities were not simply confined to particular categories of life, prompting a standard response, but indicated a situation in which there had been a more general breakdown of social relations. Rather than seeking to categorise the spells simply, according to a specific domain of activity or a single (emotional) motivation, this prompts us to seek a more nuanced analysis of what these spells were intended to achieve. This leads first to a consideration of the possible range of responses of an individual in a variety of social situations. As I have argued elsewhere, examination of the gamut of emotional motivations (and consideration of the nature of culturally specific emotions) is important in this context.[20] But I also want to suggest here that the authors of these spells were not only responding to the situation in which they found themselves. This is not to deny that the writing of binding spells was a practice firmly set in the context of everyday experience, but, as well as considering this aspect, I want to set out the possibility that the act of writing or commissioning a binding spell was not only socially and individually reactive, it was also a creative act.

Further elaboration of this approach is provided by the work of the anthropologist Bruce Kapferer, whose work on magical practices in Sri Lanka has led him to argue that we should not regard these kinds of activities simply as representations of social realities. Instead we should see them foremost as 'exercises in the construction and destruction of the psychosocial realities that human beings live and share'.[21] As I have argued

[20] Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, esp. pp. 167–262.
[21] B. Kapferer, *Beyond Rationalism: Rethinking Magic, Witchcraft and Sorcery* (Oxford, 2003) 302.

elsewhere, this idea enables us to move away from focusing (only) on the possible (reactive) feelings of the spell author, as they responded to a situation in which they found themselves or what they valued at risk.[22] It turns our attention, instead, to the ways in which the ritual of writing a binding spell was an active intervention, intended to create a new reality by reconfiguring the relations between victim and spell author. My suggestion here is that this genre of spell achieved this, in part, by literally taking apart and then reassembling the target of the spell.

How are we to understand the lists of body parts in binding spells, the imagined process of separating the body, which they evoke, and the hoped-for results of that process? Without a whole there are no parts; for separation to take place, there must be a time before, a time of completeness. It is noticeable that binding spells focus on particular parts of the body, but do not provide any indication that the author is thinking of a violent act that could have forced the separation of those parts. Rather, it seems that this was a way of evoking – presumably for particular rhetorical purposes – the significance of those parts together as well as apart: it was intended to prompt consideration of the body in parts and in completeness. This suggestion is strengthened through consideration of further examples, in other texts, of the body in parts, which are found across a range of genres. The closest parallel is in a Hippocratic text, the *Sacred Disease*, which describes how '[e]yes, ears, tongue, hands and feet act in accordance with the discernment of the brain'.[23] The context of this discussion is an argument about the importance of the brain for the origin of the full range of emotions that we suffer – with the parts of the body then carrying out the information that the brain conveys. I will return to consideration of the brain's role later in this chapter; here I want to draw attention to the way in which the rhetorical effect of the listing of body parts is to imply how, together, they create an effective whole.

Other literary genres also use the partition of the body as rhetorical reinforcement for an argument; the consideration of parts and their coalescence as a whole is also an important aspect of these texts, although the argument conveyed differs according to the context. For example, a fragment of Parmenides reads: 'But you hold back your thought from this route of inquiry, nor let much-experienced habit force you along this path,

[22] Eidinow, *Envy Poison, and Death*, 225. See Graf *Magic in the Ancient World*, 146–47.

[23] Hippocrates, *Sacred Disease* 19: οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ τὰ ὦτα καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες καὶ οἱ πόδες οἷα ἂν ὁ ἐγκέφαλος γινώσκῃ; trans. W. H. S. Jones, Loeb.

to ply an aimless eye and resounding ear and tongue'.[24] The argument in which these lines appear seems to be concerned with the question of what it is to give an account of experience (first of what-is-not, followed by either a positive account of what-is, using sensory experience, or a negative account of what-is, confusing the senses). The individual who seeks philosophical truth is depicted in terms of the parts of their body that are active in that quest. In contrast, in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus mistakenly abuses the blind seer Teiresias as useless, by detailing the parts of his body that do not work: 'But there is [truth], except not for you. You do not have that strength, since you are maimed in your ears, in your wit, and in your eyes'.[25] The philosophical treatise of Antiphon the sophist, *On Truth*, provides a final example: the trope appears again as the writer anatomises the strictures of Greek law. The passage brings together both the action and inaction of the body, through its operation in parts and as a whole:

> For laws have been established over the eyes, as to what they must and must not see; and over the ears, as to what they must and must not hear; and over the tongue, as to what they must and must not say; and over the hands, as to what they must and must not do; and over the feet, as to what they must and must not go after; and over the mind, as to what it must and must not desire.[26]

In each of these texts, the familiar list of body parts evokes not a fragmented body, but a body that is whole. In each case, this is used to slightly different rhetorical effect, depending on the genre of the text and the context it evokes. The question then arises: how is the body-in-parts put to use in the binding spells?

A Political Discourse

I want to suggest that the anatomisation of the body parts of an enemy was, in the binding spells, a political discourse; more specifically, it was

[24] Parmenides B 7.4–6 DK: *νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχήεσσαν ἀκουὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα*; trans. P. Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (Princeton, 1998) 61.

[25] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 370–71: ἀλλ' ἔστι, πλὴν σοί· σοὶ δὲ τοῦτ' οὐκ ἔστ' ἐπεὶ / τυφλὸς τά τ' ὦτα τόν τε νοῦν τά τ' ὄμματ' εἶ; trans. R. Jebb, *The Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles* (Cambridge, 1887) 47–48.

[26] Antiphon, *On Truth* fr. 44 ii 30–iii 18: *νενο[μο]θ[έ]τηται γὰρ [ἐ]πί τε τοῖς ὀφ[θ]αλμοῖς, ἃ δεῖ αὐτο[ὺ]ς ὁρᾶν καὶ ἃ οὐ [δε]ῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ὠσίν, ἃ δεῖ αὐτὰ ἀκούειν καὶ ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ γλώττῃ, ἃ τ[ε] δεῖ αὐτὴν λέγειν καὶ ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς χερσίν, ἃ τε δεῖ αὐτὰς δρᾶν καὶ ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ποσίν, ἐφ' ἃ τε δεῖ αὐτοὺς ἰέναι καὶ ἐφ' ἃ οὐ δεῖ· καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ νῷ, ὧν τε δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ ὧν μή*; trans. G. J. Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist: The Fragments* (Cambridge, 2002) 163–65.

inspired by the realities of civic punishment. Rather than indicating a general and unfeeling attempt to constrain an enemy, as has been argued (see above), the verb of binding in these spells should be considered as a crucial signal of the intentions of these spell authors. Echoing their civic use – *deo* and its cognate *katadeo* could describe being detained as well as sent to prison – the use of these verbs in binding spells reveals an intention to inflict on the body of the spell's target some of the mechanisms of civic punishment, notably, forms of physical detention.[27] These mechanisms can be traced across Greek literary texts, and viewed in some images – sometimes of dramatic or mythic figures such as Prometheus. They reveal that prisoners were often punished by the binding of different parts of their body – most usually their hands, feet and throats – using different devices, such as the *kuphon* ('pillory'), *kloios* ('collar'), *podokakke* ('stocks') and *tumpanon* ('some instrument of torture' [LSJ] or 'cudgel').[28]

Moreover, it is clear that this type of physical binding could have far more deleterious effects than simply immobilising a target, and, indeed, that some forms were used as a mode of bloodless execution.[29] Thus, the use of this imagery in these spells should be understood as more than just a simple metaphor, and more than just a vague wish briefly to constrain a competitor. Rather, it represents a quest for justice – and one that also, importantly, drew on mechanisms of civic punishment. Elsewhere, I have examined the 'conceptual blend' that informs the language of these texts.[30] It will suffice to record here the implications of the use of this blend: the spell's author was positioning him- or herself as an agent of justice, allied with the power and authority of supernatural agency, but, importantly, instituting what he (or she) understood as a procedure of legitimate mortal punishment against a deserving target.

[27] Here I draw on the work of A. Keramopoullos, *Ho apotympanismos: sumbolē archaiologikē eis tēn istorian tou poinikou dikaiou kai tēn laographian* (Athens, 1923); see a discussion of this aspect of my argument in more detail in Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 237–42; a full list of examples of the use of the verbs to indicate civic punishment is at ibid., 238 (n. 46). W. Riess *Performing Interpersonal Violence: Court, Curse, and Comedy in Fourth Century Athens* (Berlin, 2012) 214 also argues for the significance of the verb *deo* but does not consider the significance of the body parts. I see this verb as indicative of a conceptual blend rather than a direct metaphor (and so do not agree with the elaboration of the metaphor that Riess provides, which includes the gods' 'mobilisation of the dead' to impose the punishments they allocate, for which the spell texts give no evidence).

[28] See Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 239, with images discussed at n. 52.

[29] For discussion of the cultural significance of Athenian executions as bloodless, see S. Todd, 'How to Execute Someone in Fourth-Century Athens', in V. Hunter and J. Edmondson (eds.), *Law and Social Status in Classical Athens* (Oxford, 2000) 31–51.

[30] Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 237–50.

If we accept this argument, then the imagery of binding spells, which focuses on the binding of body parts, draws on the imagery of civic punishment. There is then one additional aspect to consider, which adds a further dimension, and that is the inclusion of the binding of the mind, often in spells that appear to have been written to address legal contexts. Some examples include the following phrases:

> . . . let them be mindless (*aphrones*) . . .[31]
>
> . . . I bind Kittos the neighbour, the maker of wooden frames/ropes and Kittos' craft and work, and soul and mind (*noun*) and the tongue of Kittos.[32]
>
> O Hermes the Binder, bind the mind (*phrenas*), tongue of Kallias.[33]
>
> I bind her hands, her hands, the mind (*noun*), the (stuff of) soul, the (stuff of) head, the work, the (stuff of) heart, the stuff, the tongue.[34]
>
> I will bind Sosikleia and her possessions and her great fame and business and mind (*noun*).[35]
>
> . . . the mind and the thoughts (*ton noun kai tas phrenas*).[36]
>
> . . . the tongue and mind (*tan glossan kai ton noon*; repeated).[37]

These spell texts suggest a concern with the role of the mind in prompting action; this is also seen in (other) legal texts. Returning to Antiphon in his role as speechwriter, we find in *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning* the prosecutor repeatedly drawing attention to the intention of the defendant not just to deliver the drug in question, but also to commit murder. For example, the plaintiff seems at pains to emphasise how his stepmother had planned the death of her husband (the plaintiff's father), stating that 'she killed him intentionally, planning the death . . . she killed our father by sending the drug and ordering [the slave] to give it to him to drink'.[38] Aristotle's account of a similar story from the *Magna moralia* provides a similar emphasis:

> They say that a woman gave a potion to someone to drink, and then the man died from the potion, and the woman was put at trial at the Areopagus. When she appeared there, they acquitted her for no other reason than because [she did] not [do it] intentionally. For she gave it out

[31] *DTA* 65; also *DT* 92. [32] *DTA* 87. [33] *DTA* 88. [34] *DTA* 89. [35] *DTA* 108.
[36] *DT* 69. [37] *DT* 87.
[38] Antiphon, *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning* 1.26: ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἑκουσίως καὶ βουλεύσασα τὸν θάνατον <ἀπέκτεινεν> . . . ἡ δὲ πέμψασα τὸ φάρμακον καὶ κελεύσασα ἐκείνῳ δοῦναι πιεῖν ἀπέκτεινεν ἡμῶν τὸν πατέρα; trans. M. Gagarin, *Antiphon the Athenian: Oratory, Law, and Justice in the Age of the Sophists* (Austin, TX, 2010) 150.

> of love but she failed to achieve her goal. For this reason it did not seem to be willing since she gave it as a potion and not with the intention that the man die.[39]

In the corpus of spells, the reference to what we think of as 'mind' is indicated by use of two different terms, *phren* and *nous*, which seem to have been used almost interchangeably. It may be that nuances of difference that we find elsewhere are also represented in these texts. For example, it may have been that *phren* indicated something physical that was understood to offer a wider range of emotional functions, while *nous* was more akin to 'attention, sense, intelligence, purpose, attitude';[40] indeed, used by Anaxagoras of the active cosmic principle, it indicated a plan or intention.[41] Turning back to the spell texts, it is apparent that, in alignment with this observation, *noun* is predominantly used alongside details (albeit brief) about the plans that the spells' targets are making; however, *phrenas* also occurs in such contexts, for example:

> I bind Diokles as my opponent in court; the tongue and all the minds (*phrenas*) of those who are helping Diokles and his speech and the testimonies and all the pleas of justification that are being prepared against me and bind him . . .[42]
>
> . . . Pherenikos' soul and mind (*noun*) and tongue and plans and the things he does and the things he is planning about me.[43]
>
> Of these men I bind the tongue and mind (*noun*) and soul and body and the actions of these men, and the thoughts (*phrenas*), and understanding (*dianoian*) and their plan (*boulen*).[44]
>
> . . . and his mind (*noun*) and tongue and soul and the deeds which he is planning against us and the case for damages, which Athenodoros is bringing against us.[45]

[39] Aristotle, *Magna moralia* 1.16.2 1188b30–37: οἷόν φασί ποτέ τινα γυναῖκα φίλτρον τινὶ δοῦναι πιεῖν, εἶτα τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ φίλτρου, τὴν δ' ἄνθρωπον ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ ἀποφυγεῖν· οὗ παροῦσαν δι' οὐθὲν ἄλλο ἀπέλυσαν ἢ διότι οὐκ ἐκ προνοίας. ἔδωκε μὲν γὰρ φιλίᾳ, διήμαρτεν δὲ τούτου· διὸ οὐχ ἑκούσιον ἐδόκει εἶναι, ὅτι τὴν δόσιν τοῦ φίλτρου οὐ μετὰ διανοίας τοῦ ἀπολέσθαι αὐτὸν ἐδίδου; trans. E. Harris, *The Rule of Law in Action in Democratic Athens* (Oxford, 2013) 185.

[40] Quoting from the translation of *nous* given by E. W. Handley, 'Words for "Soul", "Heart" and "Mind" in Aristophanes', *RhM* 19 (1956) 205–25 at 208–209.

[41] Anaxagoras B 12 DK (as cited in R. Padel, *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the Tragic Self* [Princeton, 1992] 32). Padel has noted (p. 39) that in tragic context *phren* (alongside *phrenes*, *kardia*, *hepar*, *chole* and *cholos*) can refer to 'physical parts and substances that behave as physical parts and substances do behave', while *nous* 'behaves like a vessel receiving emotion or sensation'. S. Sullivan, *Euripides' Use of Psychological Terminology* (Montreal, 2000) 117–18, has observed how, in Euripides' work for example, *phren* and *nous* share a role as seats of intellectual activity with some emotional connections: *phren* has a wider range of emotional functions (calm, distress, anger, courage, desire, fear, grief and madness); it also shares in pain. But *nous* shares in the emotions of fear and love in particular, as well as the moral context of gladness.

[42] *DTA* 94. [43] *DTA* 107. [44] SGD 11. [45] NGCT 9.

> I bind him on the lead, him and his mind (*noun*) and his soul so that he is unable to speak (?) against me.[46]

Whatever the precise meaning of these individual terms, the addition of the mind as a target of binding should not strike us as strange or exceptional. If we return to the previous examples of lists of body parts from other genres, we can see how those texts also encompass the role of the mind and show it working in concert with the other parts of the body according to the particular argument of the author. Thus, in the *Sacred Disease*, the body parts indicate how the brain gathers information; and, with relevance to the brief excursus above, in that passage the writer is anxious to differentiate the brain from the *phrenes*, which, as he argues, does not possess sense or understanding. The Parmenidean fragment shows how eye, ear and tongue are listed as senses that may either bring about inadequate understanding or suffer from it when the *noos* wanders from the true path. In contrast, in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus draws a parallel between Teiresias' senses and his understanding when he abuses him for being 'blind in your ears, and your *nous* as well as in your eyes'. Finally, in the philosophical treatise of Antiphon the sophist, the trope appears again, as the writer anatomises how law is hostile to nature because, as Michael Gagarin has argued, it restricts 'the freedom of action allowed by *physis*'.[47] For the purposes of my argument here, I want to draw attention to how, in each case, albeit for different purposes, the enumeration of the individual parts of the body is a trope that creates a body that is whole, one that, through the exercise of its different parts, operates as an integrated unit. This is true also of the spell texts, which encompass not only the physical attributes (hands, feet and so on) of their victims, but also their intentionality.

Subjectivation

These observations about the interaction of bodies, whole and in parts, with minds, or with other bodies, lead to a broader consideration of the ways in which these spell texts speak to not only the relationality of ancient society, but also the ideologies that shaped contemporary understandings of it. In this context, I want to introduce the idea of subjectivation, that is, as Michel Foucault put it, 'the process whereby one *obtains the constitution*

[46] NGCT 79.

[47] Gagarin, *Antiphon the Athenian*, 69, who goes on to explain that this does not mean that *nomos* necessarily contradicts *physis*, nor does it 'require us to violate it'.

of a subject, more precisely of a subjectivity which is . . . only one of the given possibilities of the organisation of a self-consciousness'.[48] For Foucault, the focus is, more precisely, the study of the formation of the 'desiring man', or 'subject of desire', and so the ethical self-constitution of the subject. As he says in *The Use of Pleasure*:

> all moral action involves . . . a relationship with the self. [This] is not simply 'self-awareness' but self formation as an 'ethical subject', a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal.[49]

This he describes as a form of experience produced within 'games of truth', indicating his concern with the ways in which language and power are integrally interrelated, but also (as McKerrow observes) marking a change of agency in Foucault's approach to the (production of the) individual.[50]

Insofar as they are a practice in which what Foucault described as 'thought' is made manifest, I want to argue that the binding spells discussed above illustrate such a process of subjectivation occurring in ancient Greek, and more specifically, Athenian, culture. The texts of the binding spells suggest that the author of a spell is acting as a knowing subject, and as a social and juridical subject, establishing his or her relation with him- or herself and others, and, finally – but closely connected with these two dimensions – is constituting him- or herself as an ethical subject. This is apparent not only in the ways that these texts indicate the positioning of the spell creators vis-à-vis their enemies, but, importantly, in the ways in which they envision the bodies, or rather body parts, of their enemies – and their minds. Not only do these texts materially demonstrate

[48] M. Foucault, 'The Return of Morality', in L. Kritzman (ed.), *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture. Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984* (London, 1988) 242–54 at 253.

[49] M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure* (New York, 1985) 28. He proposes a four-part approach for the study of sexual ethics (pp. 26–37): ethical substance (*Aphrodisia*, the works/acts of Aphrodite); ethical subjection (how one perceives the rule to apply to oneself); ethical ascetics (the kind of work one performs in order to create oneself as subject); and the *telos* or end of ethical life (he argues that for the ancient Greeks it was *sophrosune* or 'moderation'). On 'the exercise of the self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being', see further M. Foucault, 'The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom', in P. Rabinow (ed.), *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984. Volume 1: Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth* (London, 1994) 281–301 at 282.

[50] Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, 6; the quotation is part of his description of (as he put it) his third 'theoretical shift, in order to analyse what I termed "the subject" . . . I felt obliged to study the games of truth in the relationship of self with self and the forming of oneself as a subject'. See R. McKerrow, 'Foucault and Surrealism of the Truth' (2001) (accessed at www.academia.edu/5375622/Foucault_and_Surrealism_of_the_Truth).

how individuals responded to particular interpersonal conflicts that raised ethical questions, but they also reveal something of how they imagined others to be doing so, as well.

The separation of the body into parts is an important aspect of both the imagined and actual processes of these responses, and (with reference back to the discussion of Taussig at the beginning of this chapter) here I want to examine briefly some of the reasons why this imagined body was a powerful fiction in this context. To do this I will draw on some of the ideas found in Bakhtin's description of Rabelais' depiction of the 'grotesque body'. This is the body of the carnival, which, by highlighting particular body parts – belly, nose, breasts and sexual organs – up-ends the hierarchy of the body politic. It is an image of the body that speaks, albeit with no voice, of radical social change. Bakhtin describes it as a challenge to the 'classic images of the finished, completed man, cleansed, as it were, of all the scoriae of birth and development'.[51] But he emphasises how this 'unfinished' aspect of it leads also to its nature as (re)generative and creative: 'It frees human consciousness, thought and imagination for new potentialities'.[52] Through this image, he suggests, Rabelais was destroying the hierarchic picture of the world, as evinced by the usual concept of the body, and was creating a new concept.[53] Thus, Bakhtin argues that in Rabelais' novel the grotesque body can be understood as playing a crucial part in the struggle to overcome cosmic fear: 'the terror of the cosmic is countered by the laughter evoked by the image' of this body, which is 'the last and best word of the cosmos, its leading force'.[54]

I think there is much to offer us here as we consider the imagery of binding spells and explore the violence that shaped these texts and which they express. In pulling apart their victim, in subjecting his or her parts to the imagery of civic violence, with all the associated humiliation, the author of a binding spell created a body that was visually divided and metaphorically punished. In both the real and the imagined contexts of punishment, the victim's body was likely to have been a target of mocking laughter.[55] The body of the victim in these spell texts was, like that

[51] M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, IN, 1984) 25–26. [52] Ibid., 49.
[53] Ibid., 362. [54] Ibid., 336, 341.
[55] See Todd, 'How to Execute Someone', 45–47; Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 225–26, with discussion of H. S. Versnel's emphasis on this element as the primary aim of binding spells in '"Punish Those Who Rejoice in Our Misery": On Curse Tablets and Schadenfreude', in D. R. Jordan, H. Montgomery and E. Thomassen (eds.), *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4–8 May 1996* (Bergen, 1999) 125–62.

described by Bakhtin, incomplete – but here we must handle the parallel with Bakhtin's grotesque body carefully. Whereas, in his view, the grotesque body countered cosmic fears through its creativity, the listing of parts of the body in ancient Greek spell texts worked, I would argue, slightly differently. To begin with, the listing of body parts in spell texts countered social as much as cosmic fears: the two were closely conceptually related. The social threat was one that had cosmic elements (after all, there was widespread belief that, even if only at some level, an individual's fate was divine in origin); in turn, it was likely that any cosmic threat would be carried out in the social sphere. Second, while the body as depicted in parts in the binding spells was one that could provoke mocking laughter, this was also a body that was being constrained, even to death. Moreover (and third), while the body of the spell texts can be seen as creative and promising the possibility of regeneration, this potential is not intended for the body of the target of a binding spell; rather this was the aim for another body, usually not described in such a text, that of the author of the spell.[56] He or she, through the evocation of the bound body of his or her target(s), created a new reality in which he or she was no longer at risk, but instead was strengthened in their sense of self as a political actor.

Conclusion: Bodies Politic

In sum, I have argued here that these texts reveal broader cultural conceptions of risk and related concepts of blame, accountability and responsibility. The intentions of those who authored these spells were not (or not only) to restrain their competitors, but rather to harm their opponents. To do this they drew on the language and ideas of civic punishment, and this, in turn, provided them with the emotional relief they sought. But this was not simply the comfort of knowing that they might best their rival in a competition. Rather, it was the reassurance that they were invoking models of civic punishment against their enemies, with the additional strength of supernatural force. Writing a binding spell, while it may have been a secret or even illegitimate process, was one that legitimised the feelings and actions of those who employed it.[57]

[56] The author of the spell usually remains anonymous; see Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 146–47, for details of some of the authors who name themselves.

[57] On the argument that writing binding spells was illegal, see ibid., 156: there is no evidence to support it.

From this perspective, we can argue that the creation of binding spells, far from being a marginal practice, was integrally linked to civic values and institutions. Through the process of binding, an enemy – depicted through a focus on his or her active parts, both physical and mental – was constituted as the subject of the *polis*; in turn, the creator or commissioner of the binding spell was similarly constituted, legitimised by his or her invocation of a civic process of punishment. This remains the case even if it is argued that binding spells demonstrate the acquisition and subversion of civic legal action: it is only through the association with civic roles that the imagery of the spell acquires its power. In conclusion, and returning to Taussig's reflections on the power of narratives, with which this chapter began, these spells should be regarded as constituent pieces of a political discourse – one that was intended, not only to control one's enemies, but also, in so doing, to reinforce the concept of the individual as a political actor, that is, as both wielding, and subject to, the laws (formal and informal) of the *polis*.

CHAPTER 4

The Expulsion of Isis Worshippers and Astrologers from Rome in the Late Republic and Early Empire[*]

Christian R. Raschle

Introduction

Recent debates on religious violence in the Roman empire have focused mainly on the change from a polytheistic to a monotheistic empire, 'das Problem des Monotheismus', as stated by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann.[1] In the tradition of the Enlightenment, polytheism and traditional religious practices are depicted as tolerant, because their inclusive character allowed individuals to adhere freely to as many and whichever cults they desired.[2] The associated belief-systems are generally considered to have been open and non-coercive. Even the very category of 'belief' has been called into question, since it was the adequate performance of the rites that mattered. New cults could always be adapted and reinterpreted in familiar terms.[3] Since gods and spirits were conceived of mainly as local entities, the veneration of foreign gods and spirits in a foreign country would be nothing more than a polite act: when in Alexandria, do as the Alexandrians do. Finally, nothing prevented an individual with enough backers and financial means from founding his or her own shrine.

* I would like to thank Christopher Lougheed for correcting my English.

1 See the critical reassessment of the discussion by R. Bloch, 'Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der paganen Antike: Zu Jan Assmanns Monotheismus-Kritik', in R. Bloch et al. (eds.), *Fremdbilder – Selbstbilder. Imaginationen des Judentums von der Antike bis in die Neuzeit* (Basel, 2010) 5–24; J. N. Bremmer, 'Religious Violence and Its Roots: A View from Antiquity', *Asdiwal* 6 (2011) 71–79 (repr. in W. Mayer and C. de Wet [eds.], *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* [London, 2018] 30–42), and 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', in A. C. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) 8–30 at 12–18.

2 See the General Introduction, p. 4, Kippenberg, pp. 17–18, and Bremmer, p. 49, all this volume.

3 As e.g. with the so-called *interpretatio Romana*; see C. Ando, 'Interpretatio Romana', in L. de Blois, P. Funke and J. Hahn (eds.), *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religion, Rituals and Religious Life in the Empire* (Leiden, 2006) 51–65.

Nevertheless, it is also well known that this picture of ancient religious tolerance is highly problematic.[4] There are many ancient instances of violence against religious communities and particular religious practices. Governments could react with legal violence, especially when individuals or groups were considered a threat to society.[5] Focusing on the period from the first century BCE to the first century CE, this chapter will explore when, how and why the Roman government of the late Republic and early empire took violent measures against the Isis cult and astrologers. Both came to Rome from the Hellenised eastern part of the Mediterranean and were seen by many Romans as foreign to their religious horizon. While the Romans lacked the means – and probably also the will – to exert control over most of the cult practices in the periphery of their empire, its centre, the city of Rome, was always a special case.

The elite in this period continued to define its Roman identity mainly with reference to the orally transmitted and malleable *mos maiorum*. At the same time, new imperial realities created destabilising political repercussions for members of the elite.[6] The regulation of new cults arriving in Rome seemed to create particular problems for the cohesion of the elite, its place in the network of social relations of power and the power structure of its political institutions.[7] In a society that was renegotiating the balance of power and renewing its social structure in the critical years of the first century BCE, foreign cults were an embedded part of political life and could be exploited to reach collective and individual goals.[8]

[4] See on this point the General Introduction, pp. 6–7, and, especially, Bendlin, this volume, pp. 136–38.

[5] Bremmer, 'Religious Violence and Its Roots', 77–78 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 34), points out that religious violence in Antiquity is mostly state-sponsored and could range from legal measures of prohibition to organised persecution. For the current debate on the concept of *polis*-religion in the Roman context, see J. Scheid, *Les dieux, l'État et l'individu: réflexions sur la religion civique à Rome* (Paris, 2013) 41–49.

[6] See A. Bendlin, 'Looking beyond the Civic Compromise: Religious Pluralism in Late Republican Rome', in E. Bispham and C. Smith (eds.), *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome: Evidence and Experience* (Edinburgh, 2000) 115–35, for the rich debate on the embeddedness of religion in the social and political changes of the late Republic, and Scheid, *Dieux, l'État et l'individu*, for a response to the arguments of Bendlin.

[7] We follow here E. M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden, 1997), who argues that the Senate always sought control over temple building. Cf. A. Ziolkowski, *The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and the Historiographical and Topographical Context* (Rome, 1992), who argues that foreign cults were not formally excluded from the urban core so long as enough land was available.

[8] Using a sociological and anthropological approach, E. M. Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2010), makes a strong argument for the political will and capacity of the Romans to integrate foreign cults. He suggests that the personal agenda of individual Roman politicians was the main determining factor in the introduction or repression of foreign cults in

It must be emphasised, however, that the introduction of foreign gods and cults in Rome was not a late Republican novelty, but rather an integral part of Rome's political culture, playing an important part in the empire's success story. There were the early Republican rites of *evocatio* described by Livy, whereby Roman commanders invited the divine protectors of enemy cities to decamp to Rome. These *evocationes* would presumably have materially altered the sacral topography of Rome with new temples and festivals,[9] though the rarity of these cases weighs against the historicity of the practice and suggests a later reconstruction.[10] The point of these stories, however, is that the new cults were introduced to Rome by elite consensus as a diplomatic tool to politically integrate vanquished enemies.[11] One can argue that the towns of central Italy shared a common cultural heritage and that therefore these 'non-Roman' cults had never been entirely foreign. Nevertheless, these acts set a pattern that allowed for the successful arrival of other cults coming from all over the Mediterranean. Eventually Rome's involvement with the power politics of the Hellenistic kingdoms would lead to the introduction of several Hellenistic cults for diplomatic purposes, while at the same time pushing the elite to regulate and take violent action against foreign cults, if its members perceived that these cults ran afoul of the unwritten rules and customs (*mos maiorum*) that defined a distinct Roman identity and its associated civic religion.[12]

For instance, in the aftermath of an epidemic, the invitation of Asclepius in 293 BCE brought a non-Italic god to Rome. His worship was confined to the Tiber Island for medical reasons, but also because the appearance of the god in the form of a snake was completely new to the Romans. Beside the elite's interest in the Hellenic way of life, this outreach over the Adriatic Sea was a sign that Rome itself had become part of the Greek cultural world and was accepted as a political ally in the aftermath of the

Rome, an approach earlier taken by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979) 20 and M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1998) 134–40.

[9] Orlin, *Foreign Cults*, 36–46.

[10] Cf. F. Glinister, 'Sacred Rubbish', in Bispham and Smith, *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome*, 54–70 at 61–63.

[11] G. Gustafsson, *Evocatio Deorum: Historical and Mythical Interpretations of Ritualised Conquests in the Expansion of Ancient Rome* (Uppsala, 2000) 46–55 and 83–86 on mythical historiography.

[12] Religious violence against the so-called Oriental cults has been treated by e.g. E. S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden, 1990) 34–78; L. Rutgers, 'Roman Policy toward the Jews: Expulsion from the City of Rome during the First Century CE', in K. Donfried and P. Richardson (eds.), *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (Grand Rapids, 1998) 93–116; Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome* 1, 91–96, 230–31.

succession wars of Alexander's heirs.[13] A more problematic case of the introduction of a foreign deity to Rome was that of Cybele, the Magna Mater, following the Roman alliance with the Attalid Kingdom in 205/204 BCE. As in the case of the introduction of Asclepius, the importation of the goddess in the form of a black stone and the foundation of her temple followed wholly Roman models. Apparently, only after the cult was firmly established did some members of the Roman elite discover non-Roman practices in the temple precinct, like the self-castration of the priests of Attis, the acolyte of Cybele. Tact was required, since the introduction of the deity and its cult was a project of Rome's elite and important diplomatic ties were at stake: the result was that Roman citizens were ordered to abstain from non-Roman behaviour and were henceforth excluded from becoming priests of Cybele.[14]

Last but not least, after the Sibylline Books had been burned in 83 BCE, the Senate chose not to re-establish their content from Italian sources probably available in Cumae, but to send ambassadors to Asia Minor. This was clearly a political move: both a demonstration of faith in its allies in the war against Mithridates and a means of disciplining the 'rebellious' region of Campania.[15] Not for nothing did the Emperor Claudius state in his speech to the Senate in 48 CE that Rome became great because its elite was able to advance its interests by integrating the best foreign elements.[16] These examples show clearly that religious change and the introduction of new cults and deities in Rome required the sanction of the elite, with its political projects, but that the cults could be adapted to satisfy the *mos maiorum*, for example by integrating festivals associated with these cults into the official priestly calendar.[17]

It is clear, however, that not all foreign cults and religious practices were welcome, especially when their arrival was not the object of elite consensus. It was widely believed that foreign cults could undermine society with their strange behaviours, and they were therefore regarded as secret societies.[18] Government-sponsored violence broke out only a few years after

[13] Orlin, *Foreign Cults*, 62–70. [14] Ibid., 76–84 and *passim*. [15] Ibid., 202–203.

[16] *CIL* XIII 1668; Tacitus, *Annals* 11.23–24, discussed by W. Riess, 'Die Rede des Claudius über das Ius Honorum der gallischen Notablen: Forschungsstand und Perspektiven', *REA* 105 (2003) 211–49.

[17] For this pragmatic approach, see A. Bendlin, 'Nicht der Eine, nicht die Vielen: Zur Pragmatik religiösen Verhaltens in einer polytheistischen Gesellschaft am Beispiel Roms', in R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann (eds.), *Götterbilder, Gottesbilder, Weltbilder: Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der Welt der Antike*, vol. 2 (Tübingen, 2006) 279–311.

[18] On fears of conspiracy, see D. Baudy, 'Prohibitions of Religion in Antiquity: Setting the Course of Europe's Religious History', in C. Ando and J. Rüpke (eds.), *Religion and Law in Classical and*

the arrival of the Magna Mater in the Bacchanalia affair of 186 BCE. Livy, our main literary source, and the *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* paradigmatically present the fears – real or imagined – and attest to the violent measures which the state could deploy against foreign cults, and its justification for the resort to violence as a battle against conspiracy and sorcery.[19] But allusions in Plautus' plays lead us to believe that the cult was more widely known than the consul Spurius Postumius Albinus would have admitted in his report to the Senate. This new cult mainly consisted of freedmen, women and the uneducated, in short those on the margins of Roman society. All the same, in Livy's account, it is the members of the elite who are the worshippers and trigger the individual investigation of the consul. The consul acts at his own discretion and it is he who depicts the cult in terms of a conspiracy. It is not a religious council but rather the Senate which takes measures, and the *senatus consultum* is enforced not only in the city itself and against the elite (as in the case of the cult of Attis and Cybele), but on the whole peninsula.[20]

In this way, a minor religious affair, little more than an infraction of Roman private law by a few members of the elite, launched a major political offensive aimed at controlling the private religious behaviour of both the elite and the masses in the entire territory directly governed by Rome, thereby setting the boundaries of proper Roman religious behaviour. We do not know how successful the policy was over the long term, though since many Bacchanals were privately and locally sponsored, one can argue that destroying the infrastructure and killing the leaders would be a decisive blow. Nevertheless, the measures did not prevent either the common people or members of the elite from embracing, introducing and sponsoring new cults. Indeed, the new rules proposed in the *senatus consultum* provided a model for making these new cults acceptable to the Roman *mos maiorum*.[21]

Christian Rome (Stuttgart, 2006) 100–14 at 105–09; D. Frankfurter, 'Religion in the Mirror of the Other: A Preliminary Investigation', in F. Prescendi and Y. Volokhine (eds.), *Dans le laboratoire de l'historien des religions: mélanges offerts à Philippe Borgeaud* (Geneva, 2011) 74–90.

[19] Livy 39.8–19; *CIL* I^2 581 = *ILS* 18 = *ILLRP* 511.

[20] H. Cancik-Lindemaier, 'Der Diskurs Religion im Senatsbeschluss über die Bacchanalia von 186 v. Chr. und bei Livius (B. 39)', in H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger and P. Schäfer (eds.), *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, vol. 2 (Tübingen, 1996) 77–96.

[21] Orlin, *Foreign Cults*, 162–69, along with S. A. Takács, 'Politics and Religion in the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 BC', *HSPh* 100 (2000) 301–10, for the particular political dimensions. For a thorough review of the relevant scholarship, see J.-M. Pailler, *Bacchanalia: la répression de 186 av. J.-C. à Rome et en Italie: vestiges, images, tradition* (Paris, 1988); B. Perri, *Il 'senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus' in Livio e nell'epigrafe di Tiriolo* (Soveria, 2005); M. Riedl, 'The Containment of Dionysos: Religion and Politics in the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 BCE', *International Political Anthropology* 5 (2012) 113–33.

In any case, the Bacchanalia affair served as a blueprint for future state-sponsored violence against non-Roman cults, sanctioning the principle that the state could interfere in private cult practices if a magistrate thought it politically relevant. These actions against other cults might even reflect purely momentary political calculations, although to suppose that the Roman elite made a sustained effort to control the masses by policing private religious behaviour is to give too much credit to its law-enforcing capacity.

These preliminary remarks underline the fact that outbursts of so-called 'religious violence' in polytheistic societies go hand in hand with political, social and cultural factors. In the case of Rome, it is important to stress that the introduction of new cults was not necessarily negatively viewed. Although new irritants might accompany the introduction of the 'other' for the greater political good, the act as such was seldom reversed so long as the introduction of the new cult was a common project of the ruling elite. Even developments which we might anachronistically call 'subcultural', such as the Bacchus cult, the cults of Isis and Sarapis, and astrology, were not always within the view of the guardians of *Romanitas*, so long as it was not in the interests of an individual political actor or group to take action. Religious repression, regulation and the sometimes violent reaction of the ruling elite reflect a desire for greater elite cohesion and control of the behaviour of its members. They need to be seen in the wider context of political culture and the process of defining Roman identity.

Religious change should be understood, then, as a complex process of negotiations among the elite members of Roman society. Since its political culture underwent major changes in which political violence became prominent, and since religion is recognised as embedded in society, we will show that 'religious violence' is typically a by-product of political violence.[22] The expulsions of members of the Sarapis and Isis cults as well as astrologers are symptomatic of these ongoing 'negotiations' of interest groups.

The Cults of Isis and Sarapis

The cults of Isis, Sarapis and the other members of their 'family' developed as a complex interchange of Greek and Egyptian religious practices in

[22] Roman religion is inextricably linked with political life, as shown by J. Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Bloomington, 2003) and J. Rüpke, *Roman Religion* (Oxford, 2007). R. Alston, *Rome's Revolution: Death of the Republic and Birth of the Empire* (Oxford, 2015), paints a dark picture of the daily political violence at the end of the Republic.

Ptolemaic Egypt and spread throughout the Mediterranean world in the middle of the third century BCE. The state-sponsored manifestation of the cults by the Ptolemaic dynasty and its further adaptation in the Greek and Roman world explain both their rapid propagation and their persecution.[23] The cults had probably reached Rome by the end of the second century BCE as a by-product of continuous Roman involvement in the power politics of the Eastern Mediterranean.[24] It is therefore plausible that it was not the *plebs* but members of the governing elite who first came into contact with these cults. The so-called *Iseum Metellinum* was probably founded at this time by private sponsorship of a leading family, although evidence for the date, circumstances and even the place is inconclusive.[25] In any case, a funerary inscription dated between 90 and 60 BCE and naming T. Sulpicius Caecilius, probably a freedman, as a priest of a Capitoline Isis suggests that the cult had, by then, established its presence in the very heart of the city.[26]

The interest of both the political class – and hence of the Roman authors – and the wider Roman public grew as Egypt became the main flashpoint of Roman foreign politics,[27] and as members of the Ptolemaic dynasty repeatedly tried to secure their position on the throne with the

[23] Current scholarship distinguishes two phases of expansion: the first, from the third century BCE onwards, sponsored by the Ptolemaic kings and their allies, and the second, after the end of the first century CE, sponsored by the Roman emperors. See L. Bricault, *Atlas de la diffusion des cultes isiaques (IV^e s. av. J.-C.–IV^e s. ap. J.-C.)* (Paris, 2001), and 'La diffusion isiaque: une esquisse', in C. Bolp (ed.), *Fremdheit – Eigenheit: Ägypten, Griechenland und Rom. Austausch und Verständnis* (Stuttgart, 2004) 548–56.

[24] On the political history, see G. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches: Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung* (Darmstadt, 1994); A. Lampula, *Rome and the Ptolemies of Egypt: the Development of Their Political Relations, 273–80 BC* (Helsinki, 1998); W. Huss, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit, 332–30 v. Chr.* (Munich, 2001).

[25] The sole text reference is *Historia Augusta*, Thirty Tyrants 25.4. The location given by M. de Vos, 'Iseum Metellinum', in E. M. Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1996) 110–12, is entirely conjectural and is based on F. Coarelli, 'I monumenti dei culti orientali in Roma', in U. Bianchi and M. J. Vermaseren (eds.), *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'impero romano* (Leiden, 1982) 33–67. Cf. M. Malaise, 'Octavien et les cultes isiaques à Rome en 28', in L. Bricault and R. Veymiers (eds.), *Bibliotheca Isiaca*, vol. 2 (Bordeaux, 2011) 185–99 at 198, who is far more critical about the limited evidence.

[26] *CIL* VI 2247 (= *ILS* 4405 = *ILLRP* 159 = *SIRIS* 377 = *RICIS* 501/0109), with Orlin, *Foreign Cults*, 204, based for this date on F. Coarelli, 'Iside Capitolina, Clodio e i mercanti di schiavi', in N. Bonacasa and A. di Vita (eds.), *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano: studi in onore di Achille Achiani* (Rome, 1984) 461–75, whereas Degrassi, in his commentary to the inscription in the *ILLRP*, proposes 58 BCE. For an extensive review of the scholarship on this inscription, see Malaise, 'Octavien et les cultes isiaques', 189.

[27] Y. Lehmann, 'Varron et les cultes gréco-orientaux: étude de sociologie religieuse', in B. Amiri (ed.), *Religion sous contrôle: pratiques et expériences religieuses de la marge?* (Besançon, 2016) 19–28, concludes that Varro's interest in Egyptian cosmogenic theologies indicates that the erudite elite was also familiar with Isis and Sarapis.

assistance of ambitious Roman politicians.[28] Rome's political authorities did not intervene directly and the 'Egyptian' question was still open in 63 with Pompey's reorganisation of the East. Only in 58/57 was Ptolemy XII restored to his throne, thanks to Roman military intervention.[29] It is in connection with these political manoeuvres that the Senate ordered a first expulsion of priests of Isis and Sarapis and the destruction of their altars on the Capitoline hill in 58 BCE.

Tertullian's apologetical and polemical treatise *To the Nations*, our only source, explicitly connects this ban to the affair *de Bacchanalibus*, citing Varro.[30] In Tertullian's view, both incidents serve as instances in which the Senate abolished gods and their places of worship without consulting the people of Rome and without any sincere religious policy.[31] Such measures could result in serious rioting. Unlike in the affair *de Bacchanalibus*, there were open challenges to the Senate's order because the offending monuments were clearly visible in the religious heart of Rome, the Capitoline hill, rather than hidden like the Bacchanals. The response from the masses was a clear challenge to the Senate's authority in religious matters. They even pressed the entering consul of 58, A. Gabinius, to include Isis and Sarapis in his initial offerings, and thus to take a counter-stance against the Senate. Although Gabinius did not revoke the senatorial measures or the destruction of the altars on the Capitoline hill, he did not otherwise forbid the performance of rituals.[32]

[28] The Ptolemaic dynasts repeatedly bequeathed their kingdom to the Romans in absence of a male heir and as life insurance against possible usurpations. Orlin, *Foreign Cults*, 205, considers the events of 87 BCE, when Ptolemy IX or his son Ptolemy X allegedly bequeathed his throne to the people of Rome, as the beginning of domestic tensions over the cults of Isis and Sarapis at Rome. The testament, although it would not have been unprecedented (cf. *SEG* IX 7 from 155 BCE), was simply a rumour, as has been shown by Huss, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 659–60 (based on Cicero, *On the Agrarian Law* 1.1, 2.41–44).

[29] Huss, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 682–95, for a detailed account and the evidence.

[30] Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 1.10.16–18 (*CCSL* 1, p. 25) and *Apologeticum* 6.8 (*CCSL* 1, pp. 97–98). Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 2.73 (pp. 152–53 Marchesi) follows Tertullian and shares his view of the persecution of 58 BCE as a landmark event.

[31] Lehmann, 'Varron et les cultes gréco-orientaux', 20–21, suggests that Varro was a member of the *Xviri sacris faciundis* in 58, and thus the instigator of the edict that Tertullian cites in an abridged version. A. Rolle, 'Ego medicina Serapi utor: les Ménippées de Varron et le culte de Sérapis dans la Rome tardo-républicaine', in Amiri, *Religion sous contrôle*, 29–40, demonstrates Varro's familiarity with several aspects of the Isis cult and his satirical use of it. She discusses all the evidence in A. Rolle, *Varrone e i culti orientali a Roma* (Pisa, 2016) 122–221.

[32] It is still debated whether Gabinius was a worshipper of Isis owing to his allegiance to Sulla and Pompey, two alleged supporters of Isis in Rome, as suggested by L. Hayne, 'Isis and Republican Politics', *AClass* 35 (1992) 143–49, who explains the various senatorial actions against Isis throughout the 50s and 40s as directed against Pompey. S. A. Takács, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World* (Leiden, 1995) 62–63, explains Gabinius' decision not to confront the Senate as part of his allegiance to the *optimates*. See also M. Ciceroni, 'Introduzzione ed evoluzione dei culti egiziani a Roma in età

Thus the proliferation of new shrines and sanctuaries continued elsewhere in the city.[33]

In 53 BCE the target was not public altars and the public visibility of the Isis cult but privately erected shrines. Now the senatorial decree sought to ban the cult not only from the religious centre – what could be tentatively called the locus of civic religion – but also from the nominal perimeter of the city, the *pomerium*, thus enhancing the religious connotation of the ban and the 'non-Romaness' of the cult. This measure shows an increasing sensitivity towards the cult.[34] Cassius Dio, our only source for this event, who lived under Severan emperors who had fully embraced the cults of Isis and Sarapis in their imperial self-representation, interprets this measure as another bad omen for the following year in a list of traditional Roman *prodigia* announcing further fighting in the civil strife.[35] Again the measures fell short of eradicating the cult practices because they did not target followers and priests outside the *pomerium*, which had in any case ceased to be the physical boundary of the city. The *pomerium* now arguably served instead as an ideological boundary between the centre of civic religion and the place of the other deities of the empire.

The next incident, in 48 BCE, often interpreted as a retaliation for the murder of Pompey in Egypt, is also reported by Cassius Dio, again in a summary of dire religious events. The story reads like a conflict between civic and new cults, in that precincts (τεμενίσματα) of Isis and Sarapis on the Capitoline hill were destroyed because the soothsayers (*haruspices*) blamed them for a bad *prodigium*, a swarm of bees found on a nearby statue of Hercules. While destroying the precincts, remains of human flesh were found, giving the whole episode a sinister tone that correlates with the fear of conspiracy, as in the Bacchanalia affair.[36] As in 58 BCE, the measures look like the purification of sacred public space on the Capitoline

repubblicana: la testimonianza delle fonti letterarie', in G. Caratelli (ed.), *Roma e l'Egitto nell'antichità classica* (Rome, 1992) 103–107 at 106; A. Arena, 'Romanità e culto di Serapide', *Latomus* 60 (2001) 297–313 at 302–303, Malaise 'Octavien et les cultes isiaques', 191–92.

[33] M. J. Versluys, 'Isis Capitolina and the Egyptian Cults in Late Republican Rome', in L. Bricault (ed.), *Isis en Occident: actes du II*^{ème} *colloque international sur les études isiaques* (Leiden, 2004) 421–48, makes it clear that there is no evidence for a temple of Isis on the Capitoline hill.

[34] See also Varro's reaction as reported in Servius' *Commentary on the Aeneid of Virgil* 8.698: *Varro indignatur Alexandrinos deos Romae coli* ('Varro was indignant that Alexandrian gods were worshipped in Rome').

[35] Cassius Dio 40.47.3–4, on which see P. Cordier, 'Dion Cassius et les phénomènes religieux "égyptiens": quelques suggestions pour un mode d'emploi', in L. Bricault, M. J. Versluys and P. G. P. Meyboom (eds.), *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman World* (Leiden, 2007) 89–110 at 98–100, who interprets the τέρας as *omen imperii*; cf. Takács, *Isis and Sarapis*, 64.

[36] Cassius Dio 42.26.

hill with the goal of eliminating unwanted divine competition.[37] The episode is of particular interest since Cassius Dio specifies that the Romans used a de-sacralisation rite when razing the shrines.[38] But even this was met with the flat refusal of the workforce to destroy the sacred precincts. Some of those involved (slaves, freedmen, members of the *plebs*) may conceivably have been worshippers of Isis and Sarapis themselves. According to Valerius Maximus, the consul L. Aemilius Paullus was compelled to personally wield the ritual axe, *securis*, to start the destruction of the shrine.[39] The divide between, on the one hand, the Senate and executive magistrates, who together formed the ruling elite, and, on the other hand, the masses clearly comes to the fore in this episode, just as it did in the incidents of 58 BCE.

Given the political background of the 'Egyptian question' and the fact that our documentary and literary sources identify mainly freedmen and members of the *plebs* as adherents to the Isis cult, two models for interpreting the events have been suggested. Older research, especially that which follows the 'decadence model' of Roman religion, views these regulations as futile attempts to free Rome from corrupting foreign elements.[40] The Senate and the consuls A. Gabinius and L. Aemilius Paullus, in this view, were reasserting the authority of the Senate to direct the

[37] Rodney Stark's sociological concept of the 'religious marketplace' has generally been favourably received in discussions about religions in the Roman empire; see W. Mayer, 'Re-Theorising Religious Conflict', in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 3–29 at 7–9, and her chapter, this volume, p. 259. In our case, it is important to remember that the *haruspices* themselves had been imported into the 'Roman marketplace' and thus found their niche of expertise there, as shown by D. Briquel, '*Etrusca disciplina* and Roman Religion: From Initial Hesitation to a Privileged Place', in D. Engels and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *Religion and Competition in Antiquity* (Brussels, 2014) 112–32. The model of 'competition' is argued for at length by S. Montero, '*Haruspices* contra *Isiaci*: la oposición auruspical a la introducción del culto isiaco en Roma', in J. A. Delgado-Delgado (ed.), *Dioses viejos dioses nuevos: formas de incorporación de nuevos cultos en la ciudad antigua* (Las Palmas, 2006) 41–52.

[38] Cassius Dio 42.26.2, which points to the rite of *exauguratio*. We are best informed about this rite in the case of new temple building projects, the classic case being that of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, where the gods of the existing shrines needed to be asked to accept the change; see Glinister, 'Sacred Rubbish', 66–67.

[39] Valerius Maximus 1.3.4; with Takács, *Isis and Sarapis*, 57–59 and Versluys, 'Isis Capitolina', 432, dating the event to 50 BCE. M. Malaise, *Les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie* (Leiden, 1972) 374, identifies τεμενίσματα in Cassius Dio with different cult objects (*fana*, the word used by Valerius Maximus) placed in a precinct, and argues that the consul demolished the main access.

[40] See the overview in C. Bonnet and A. Bendlin, 'Les "religions orientales": approches historiographiques', *ARG* 8 (2006) 151–273, and the thought-provoking article by M. J. Versluys, 'Orientalizing Roman Gods', in L. Bricault and C. Bonnet (eds.), *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Graeco-Roman Empire* (Leiden, 2013) 235–59.

people in religious matters. As in the Bacchanalia affair, the authorities attempted to impose regulations in a quest to keep Roman identity intact by drawing clear boundaries for non-Roman behaviour.

Recent research, however, has abandoned the decadence model and stresses instead the will of the elite to clearly demarcate acceptable from unacceptable Roman religious behaviour using a highly malleable concept of *mos maiorum* and *Romanitas*. For example, the trope of the non-Romaness of the 'Egyptian' cults recurs frequently in Latin poetry and we might legitimately wonder whether the poets were simply exploiting common stereotypes or sometimes intended to harm the followers of the cult. We could thus speak of literary violence in late Republican Rome due to the continuous repetition of religious and 'racial' prejudices.[41] The Isis cult and astrology (to which we come back in more detail in the next section) were both attractively 'exotic' poetic subjects and frightening 'others' that inspired 'xenophobic' reactions.[42]

The main accusations against the Isis cult were the zoomorphic representations of the Egyptian divinities[43] – although Isis and Sarapis are never depicted in this way – the promiscuity and the alleged debaucheries of women involved in the cult, the immoral and non-Roman rites in the temples, the immoral and non-Roman lifestyle of the goddess herself, and the lack of an ancient connection with Roman religion. These cults, then, could be viewed not as *religio* (the lawful, accepted way of dealing with divine matters) but rather as *superstitio* (overzealous or wrongful religious veneration of the gods or irrational behaviour).[44] Nevertheless, it is clear that the main motivation behind the violence against the cult was political and connected to efforts to rein in members of the elite who used cult

[41] For the Greek and Roman views of Egyptians, see B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004) 362–65. One wonders whether the *topos* of the raucous nature of the Alexandrians is actually behind the stress over the public upheaval in 58 BCE in Cassius Dio and his sources. See also the nuanced response by E. S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton, 2011) 108–11.

[42] For the general concept, see Frankfurter, 'Religion in the Mirror of the Other'.

[43] For the Roman dislike of animal-headed divinities, see Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.36, 3.16, and *Tusculan Disputations* 5.27; Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.698; Lucan, *Civil War* 8.832; Juvenal, *Satires* 15.1–13. Virgil's language (*monstra et latrator Anubis*) focuses his opposition to Egyptian gods on the form of the god, recalling Octavian's dislike for Apis; see Malaise, *Conditions de pénétration*, 248. On the general Roman aversion to Egyptian animal-headed deities, see K. A. D. Smelik and E. A. Hemelrijk, '"Who Knows Not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships?" Opinions on Egyptian Animal Worship in Antiquity as Part of the Ancient Conception of Egypt', in *ANRW* II.17.4 (Berlin, 1984) 1852–2000.

[44] Cf. the idea of the so-called rationalisation of Roman religion as argued for by J. Rüpke, *Römische Religion in republikanischer Zeit: Rationalisierung und ritueller Wandel* (Darmstadt, 2014).

affiliation as a resource for political patronage and/or to further political interests in Egypt and its quarrelsome political affairs.[45]

The wavering policy towards the cults of Isis and Sarapis is perhaps best illustrated by the Triumvirs Octavian, Mark Antony and Lepidus. In 43 BCE they expressed their intention to build a shrine to Isis and Sarapis in Rome, though there is no evidence that the temple was ever built.[46] Most likely, Caesar's heirs simply wished to continue the strategic alliance with Cleopatra VII, who had lived in Rome from 46 to 44.[47] Soon afterwards, Isis would again be an enemy of the Roman state, when Mark Antony's alliance with Cleopatra became a major threat to Octavian's power, triggering Roman prejudices against the Eastern Mediterranean world and Ancient Egyptian religion in particular that are visible in the literary works of this period.[48] Cleopatra's self-representation as Isis certainly fuelled this politically motivated rejection of the cult.[49] In 28 BCE the subsequent ban on all temples with an 'Egyptian' origin within the *pomerium* continued this anti-Egyptian sentiment of restoring Roman values and religion,[50] which went hand in hand with the exclusion – sometimes forceful, sometimes subtle – of foreign cults, if one follows Suetonius' account.[51]

[45] Orlin, *Foreign Cults*, 206, proposing that some assaults on the Isis worshippers in fact targeted political opponents. Malaise, 'Octavien et les cultes isiaques', 192–93, connects the political/social/religious struggles of the 50s BCE with the *Iseum Metellinum* under the protection of P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica, the adopted son of Metellus Pius. See Coarelli, 'Monumenti', 60–61.

[46] Cassius Dio 47.16.6.

[47] C. Alfano, 'La penetrazione della cultura egiziana in Italia', in S. Walker and P. Higgs (eds.), *Cleopatra, Regina dell'Egitto* (Milan, 2000) 210–20 at 210–12; V. Gasparini, 'Iside a Roma e nel Lazio', in E. Lo Sardo (ed.), *La Lupa e la Sfinge: Roma e l'Egitto dalla storia al mito* (Milan, 2008) 100–109 at 102.

[48] For Octavian's ambiguous relationship with the Egyptian goddesses, see E. M. Orlin, 'Octavian and Egyptian Cults: Redrawing the Boundaries of Romaness', *AJPh* 129 (2008) 231–53. On the propaganda war of the late 30s, see M. Reinhold, *From Republic to Principate: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History, Books 49–52 (36–29 BC)* (Atlanta, 1988) 222–23; L. Borgies, *Le conflit propagandiste entre Octavien et Marc Antoine: de l'usage politique de la 'vituperatio' entre 44 et 30 a.C.n.* (Brussels, 2016) 317–26; and for the non-literary evidence, P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, 1988) 57–64. On the religious component of the war, see I. Becher, 'Oktavians Kampf gegen Antonius und seine Stellung zu den ägyptischen Göttern', *Altertum* 11 (1965) 40–47 at 42–43, with Cassius Dio 50.5.3 and Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 54.

[49] For Cleopatra's representation as Isis, see M. Wyke, 'Augustan Cleopatras: Female Power and Poetic Authority', in A. Powell (ed.), *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* (London, 1992) 98–140 at 100–105. In terms of literary works, see especially Horace, *Epodes* 9 and *Odes* 1.37; Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.685–713; Propertius 3.11, 4.6.

[50] Cassius Dio 53.2.4. Cf. I. Becher, 'Augustus und seine Religionspolitik gegenüber orientalischen Kulten', in G. Binder (ed.), *Saeculum Augustum*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt, 1988) 143–70 at 149, where she states that there was no place for Isis and Sarapis in the *pax Augusta*.

[51] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 93, with D. Wardle, *Suetonius: Life of Augustus* (Oxford, 2014) 506–509. For this traditional opinion, see P. Lambrechts, 'Auguste et la religion romaine', *Latomus* 6 (1947) 177–91; A. Wardman, *Religion and Statecraft among the Romans* (London, 1982) 63–79, 113–14;

Nevertheless, since Agrippa later extended this ban to reach half a mile beyond the *pomerium*, it was apparently still possible to construct Isis shrines beyond this boundary. Agrippa's action in 21 BCE is described by Cassius Dio in the context of rioting in the city on the occasion of the consular elections, though how the ban on Egyptian rites was supposed to calm the disturbances is not clear.[52] The association of Isis and Sarapis with riot-prone Alexandria, underlined in 58 BCE, may be relevant here, and it is possible that these measures were staged in order to bolster Agrippa's authority as *aedilis*.[53]

With the formal integration of Egypt into the Roman empire, the ban on Isis shrines in Rome was gradually lifted until the full integration of the Isis cult into the sacred topography of Rome under the Flavians. Acts of violence and expulsion did occur under the Julio-Claudians but were sporadic and always connected with particular incidents. For example, the expulsion of the followers of Isis under Tiberius in 19 CE as reported by Suetonius and Tacitus is linked to the abduction of a senator's wife by a so-called Egyptian priest. However, only Flavius Josephus, who is more interested in the fate of the banished Jews in the same year, informs us of Tiberius' violent reaction. The sacking of the temple, the destruction of the cult statues and the execution of the priest are believed to be a historian's and biographer's tool to illustrate Tiberius' cruel character.[54]

J. W. Rich, *Cassius Dio: The Augustan Settlement (Roman History 53–55.9)* (Warminster, 1990) 134. Versluys, 'Isis Capitolina', 446, is a notable exception, suggesting that 'the Egyptian gods were thought to play their part in the imperial system as a public cult', though he does not specify the nature of that part. K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton, 1996) 288–312 and J. Scheid, 'Augustus and Roman Religion: Continuity, Conservatism, and Innovation', in K. Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge, 2005) 175–93, both offer judicious comments on the theme of tradition and innovation, though Galinsky (p. 190) does suggest that Octavian and Agrippa tried to 'limit the cult of Isis'. Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome* 1, 167–68, discuss the importance to Octavian of representing his programme as a restoration; although they suggest (p. 228) that Octavian did concern himself with 'patrolling the unacceptable', they note the fluidity of the category 'foreign'.

[52] Cassius Dio 54.6.

[53] Malaise, 'Octavien et les cultes isiaques', 197. Agrippa's actions are probably connected with the *lex Iulia de collegiis* (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 32.3). In this view, the *collegia* of the Isis temples could only escape the ban by withdrawing, thus demonstrating their respect for the superiority of Rome's civic religion; see K. Lembke, *Das Iseum Campense in Rom: Studie über den Isiskult unter Domitian* (Heidelberg, 1994) 88. In the same vein, Lembke proposes to date the foundation of the *Iseum Campense* on the Campus Martius in the period from 20 to 10 BCE, since Augustus' government style became less autocratic after the events of 19 BCE.

[54] Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius* 36; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85; Josephus, *Judaean Antiquities* 18.65–84, and in particular for the desacralisation and destruction 18.79–80. G. Marasco, 'Tiberio e l'esilio degli Ebrei in Sardegna nel 19 d.C.', in A. Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa Romana: atti del VIII convegno di studio*, vol. 2 (Sassari, 1991) 649–59 at 649–50 (n. 4), correctly points out that the episode best fits 19 CE,

Thus, these acts can best be explained by special circumstances rather than a broader imperial policy.

Astrology

The appeal of astrology, which was both exotic and accessible, equalled that of the Isis cult in late Republican and early imperial Rome. In terms of the religious violence that it attracted, however, there was an important difference. Whereas violent action against the Isis cult targeted monuments such as altars, shrines and temples, and could thus be publicly staged for immediate political gain, divination techniques such as astrology took place mainly in private or at improvised street stands and were therefore more difficult to track and persecute.[55]

Although astrology was mainly seen as a specialised technique to foretell the future and inquire into the will of the gods that did not need special places to perform a cult, the ancients nevertheless included it under religious practices.[56] We will also do so here for the sake of comparison. It was above all the risk that they might create mass hysteria with faulty prophecies that made astrologers suspicious to the established soothsayers (*haruspices* and *augures*): the rhetoric of the anti-astrological measures ultimately reflects staunch Roman pragmatism.[57] Livy calls astrologers

where it is placed by Suetonius and Tacitus, rather than 30 CE, the narrative context of the book. On this episode, see Malaise, *Conditions de pénétration*, 389–95; F. Mora, *Prosopografia Isiaca. Volume 2: Prosopografia storica e statistica del culto Isiaco* (Leiden, 1990) 91–97; Takács, *Isis and Sarapis*, 81–86; S. Ensoli, 'I santuari isiaci a Roma e i contesti non culturali: religione pubblica, devozione private e impiego ideologico del culto', in E. Arslan (ed.), *Iside: il mito, il mistero, la magia* (Milan, 1997) 306–21 at 307; A. Grimm, 'Iside imperiale. Aspetti storico-culturali del culto isiaco al tempo degli imperatori romani', in Arslan, *Iside*, 120–33 at 120–21; Malaise, 'Octavien et les cultes isiaques', 196, with reference to the recent archaeological discovery of alleged fragments of the cult statues and a couple of *sistra* that have been found in the riverbed of the Tiber.

[55] H. Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2016), speaks of freelance religious experts using ethnically coded attire and techniques to attract their clients.

[56] On astrology as a superior science of divination, see R. Gordon, '*Quaedam veritatis umbrae*: Hellenistic Magic and Astrology', and D. Konstan, 'Conventional Values of the Hellenistic Greeks: The Evidence from Astrology', in P. Bilde et al. (eds.), *Conventional Values of the Hellenistic Greeks* (Aarhus, 1997) 128–58 and 159–76, respectively.

[57] F. H. Cramer, *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics* (Philadelphia, 1954) 115; R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (Cambridge, MA, 1966) 131–33. This is also the main reason why the activity of astrologers was strictly regulated during Late Antiquity; see L. Desanti, *Sileat omnibus perpetuo divinandi curiositas: Indovini e sanzioni nel diritto romano* (Milan, 1990) 133–77; M.-T. Fögen, *Die Enteignung der Wahrsager: Studien zum kaiserlichen Wissensmonopol in der Spätantike* (Frankfurt, 1993); M. Hano, 'Le témoignage des textes législatifs du IV^{e} siècle sur les haruspices et la divination', in D. Briquel and C. Guittard (eds.), *Les écrivains du IV^{e} siècle: l'Etrusca disciplina dans un monde en mutation* (Paris, 2005) 4–26.

prophetic charlatans who fleece peasants;[58] Valerius Maximus, in his explanation of the expulsion of 139 BCE, repeats the prejudice that astrologers 'spread profitable darkness with their lies over frivolous and foolish minds by fallacious interpretation of the stars'.[59] It would eventually be a result of the same accusations that the street philosophers were driven from the city.[60] We hear of fourteen expulsions of astrologers between 139 BCE and 175 CE.[61] These expulsions mainly targeted street astrologers, philosophers and esoteric jacks-of-all-trades with non-elite customers. The most distinguished specialists employed by the elite, whether philosophers or astrologers, might attract political criticism but tended not to be targeted with expulsion.[62]

In her thorough review article on the expulsions of astrologers and the reasons behind them, Pauline Ripat points out that the triggering events, the reasons for the expulsions and the groups targeted varied, and that expulsions from Rome were not the only measures taken against the astrologers.[63] As in the case of the Isis cult, it was seemingly easy to expel astrologers and philosophers from the city but unrealistic to expel them from the whole Italian peninsula. These expulsions did nonetheless occur from time to time, and there is a strong case for a staging for public consumption in the rhetoric used in Cassius Dio's account of the expulsion of 33 BCE. Agrippa, as one of the *aidiles* of this year, banished astrologers and sorcerers from the city to clean up Rome and assert control over divination and prophecy.[64]

[58] Livy 25.1.8, 39.8, in connection with public anxieties during the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE).

[59] Valerius Maximus 1.3.3; trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb. Note that this example is immediately followed by consul L. Aemilius Paullus' demolition of the Isis shrine of 48 BCE in a chain of anecdotes that describe the measures of the Romans against non-Roman behaviour.

[60] The best-documented expulsion of street philosophers happened during the reign of Domitian in 93 CE; Suetonius, *Life of Domitian* 10.3; Aulus Gellius 15.11.3–5; Cassius Dio 67.13.2–3; Jerome, *Chronici canones s.a.* 95 (*GCS* 47, p. 192).

[61] Cramer, *Astrology*, 232–48, with a summary table and discussion of the sources. See the recent reassessment by P. Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions: Astrologers at Rome', *CPh* 106 (2011) 115–54.

[62] According to T. Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London, 1994) 50, 'the philosophers meant were presumably the street-corner purveyors of wisdom, who could well stir up the people in times of unrest'. See W. Nippel, *Public Order in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 1995) 93–94, on the philosophers as an organised and therefore suspect group. Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions', 120–21, sees philosophers, astrologers, prophets and magicians as service providers who varied their offer according to city politics and were therefore not a distinctive group; Wendt, *At the Temple Gates*, 40–73, gives the most recent overview of the debate.

[63] Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions'. The classic treatment of the legal aspects of astrology is still Cramer, *Astrology*.

[64] Cassius Dio 49.43.1, 5; with Borgies, *Conflit propagandiste*, 322.

The measures that Agrippa took, as with the first recorded expulsions, are not known to have been justified on specific religious grounds. Banning astrologers was simply a means of ridding the *res publica* of tricksters who threatened the public *salus* of the Roman people with their obnoxious prophecies and could control public opinions through rumours.[65] This line of thinking recalls the anti-conspiratorial rhetoric of the Bacchanalia affair.[66] Moreover, the measure is listed among measures intended to prevent public disorder that might arise from clogged sewage, broken streets and the wrong counting of the laps in the circus races, alongside free access to barbers on festival days and free food (salt and olive oil) for the crowd.[67] This complete programme of patronage – Agrippa paid for most of it out of his own funds – also promised to secure the loyalty of the capital's population in the conflict between Octavian and Mark Antony. In contrast to the cults of Isis and Sarapis, Agrippa and Octavian primarily saw the astrologers as a nuisance for the city.[68]

With the changes in the political culture and governance of the city after Octavian's victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra, astrology and other forms of divination became even more politically relevant. It was not, however, the everyday questions – whether an item of business was ready to be carried out, or a woman to be married – that threatened political order. It was, instead, questions concerning the death date of the emperor and the name of the new emperor, the answers to which were believed to be written in the stars but were a *crimen maiestatis* to ask from an astrologer or other expert in the divinatory arts. The emperors declared an imperial

[65] The association of astrologers with magicians points to the fact that street astrologers were the main target. For this association, see J. B. Rives, 'Magicians and Astrologers', in M. Peachin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (Oxford, 2011) 679–92. That elite rivalry was also at play in the case of the expulsion of the Isis priests is argued by Cramer, *Astrology*, 233 and MacMullen, *Enemies*, 133, but cf. Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions', 118, who argues that too much weight is placed on this monocausal explanation.

[66] Cf. Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions', 128, who stresses the subcultural element of these street astrologers and prophets and the fear that they might inspire, as also mentioned by Baudy, 'Prohibitions of Religion', and Frankfurter, 'Religion in the Mirror of the Other'.

[67] Cassius Dio 49.43.1–5.

[68] Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions' 122–24. On the other hand, one can also argue that the political climate in Rome became tenser as the end of the second five-year term of the *triumviri* neared. In this view Agrippa was actually preparing Rome for the rally behind Octavian and could not afford to be disturbed by politically motivated 'astrologers'. See Fögen, *Enteignung der Wahrsager*, 138–41, and Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions', 144–46, for the political use of astrology-based rumours in the context of rival *imperatores*.

monopoly on all divination related to government and state affairs that would last until Late Antiquity.[69]

Astrology thus became a state affair, although our evidence is not conclusive in every aspect since the policy of the individual emperors is far from consistent. Their attitudes towards astrology eventually became a biographical category used to describe their character, as seen in Suetonius.[70] The '*Überkaiser*' Augustus countered the many inquiries into his horoscope and alleged death date by publishing his own horoscope, thus turning the alleged danger into a tool of personal propaganda.[71] The haunted and reclusive Tiberius instead banned astrology altogether from his court. Suetonius in his biography sums up his legislation against foreign cult practices. Whereas the Isis priests in the above-mentioned incident of 19 CE were made to burn their garments and cult objects, the astrologers in 16 CE were simply banned from practising their art inside the city of Rome.[72]

Tacitus provides a more detailed account of the alleged cause of the Italy-wide ban on astrologers, namely the accusations of *crimen maiestatis* against M. Scribonius Libo, who had fallen into the snares of the astrologers, magicians and dream interpreters. Facing execution, Libo took his own life, and two of the instigators, Lucius Pituanius and Publius Marcius, were executed by the sword.[73] Again, there is no question here of active persecution of astrologers and magicians with a series of trials. Instead, it concerned an exemplary execution of two senators with the intention of strictly controlling these practices in the politically relevant circles, and a

[69] See the classic treatment of this *longue durée* by Fögen, *Enteignung der Wahrsager*. One collateral effect of such measures was that astrology received publicity at the expense of more traditional forms of divination. The ban could thus imply that these charlatans were providing a dangerously good service that had to be restricted, as Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions', 131, suggests in response to A. Wallace-Hadrill, '*Mutatas formas*: The Augustan Transformation of Roman Knowledge', in Galinsky, *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, 55–84 at 65.

[70] E.g. Augustus restricted the use of *haruspices* for private inquiries and allowed them to practise exclusively in the public sphere under the control of the *res publica*, as seen in the decree of 11 CE mentioned by Cassius Dio 56.25.5 (treating astrologers and other diviners together). Thus R. Gordon, 'Imagining Greek and Roman Magic', in B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (eds.), *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia, 1999) 159–275 at 261, and D. Potter, *Prophets and Emperors: Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge, MA, 1994) 174, stress that divination as such was not forbidden.

[71] See again Cassius Dio 56.25.5; Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 94.12, on which see esp. A. Schmid, *Augustus und die Macht der Sterne: antike Astrologie und die Etablierung der Monarchie in Rom* (Cologne, 2005); A.-M. Lewis, 'Augustus and His Horoscope Reconsidered', *Phoenix* 62 (2008) 308–37.

[72] Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius* 36.

[73] Tacitus, *Annals* 2.27–32, with R. Syme, *Tacitus, vol. 1* (Oxford, 1958) 399–400.

signal to all the other petty astrologers and magicians to stop their practices.[74] We could call it a limited action to re-establish the *mores maiorum*, not only for the elite but also for the wider public. The resulting *senatus consultum* became the blueprint for later legislation as seen in the extract of the *Comparison of Mosaic and Roman Law*, itself an extract of Ulpian's Book 7 of *On the Duty of the Proconsul*.[75]

Nevertheless, other passages in Tacitus and Suetonius reveal that the emperors were compelled to periodically reissue these bans,[76] always with limited success, and that they personally employed highly specialised consultants knowledgeable in astrology and so-called Egyptian wisdom such as Nero's *praeceptor* Chairemon.[77] The evidence implies that the banished street astrologers and other experts of divination were usually back in business before long, until the next political scandal led to the reiteration of the previous ban.

Popular at every level of society, astrology might always threaten the reigning emperor with fast-spreading rumours. The rumours of Vespasian's favourable horoscope, for instance, reportedly led to the expulsion of Vitellius and his party from Rome, although our main sources do not name Vespasian as the instigator of these rumours.[78] Cassius Dio, conversely, shows how flexibly the emperors adapted anti-astrological legislation to their means. Vespasian both consulted and expelled the best astrologers from Rome to withhold their services from those who might be dangerous to him.[79]

Conclusion

The success of the Roman empire in embracing the whole Mediterranean was due to the Romans' capacity to pragmatically integrate the new elements from the periphery into the empire's centre. Rather than

[74] Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions', 118–20, with a discussion of the sources. She ultimately contests the link between the conspiracy of Libo (or whatever the plot was) and the mass expulsion. The passage in Suetonius is more a symptomatic description of Tiberius' paranoia against all kinds of foreign cults, including the Jews, Isis and Sarapis worshippers, and astrologers. Again, it was not the real danger but the perceived one that counted in the eye of a Roman emperor.

[75] Tacitus, *Annals* 2.32; Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius* 36; Cassius Dio 57.15.8-9; *Comparison of Mosaic and Roman Law* 15.2.

[76] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.52, mentions that L. Arruntius Furius Scribonianus was exiled for consulting with astrologers about the death of the Emperor Claudius shortly before reporting a *senatus consultum* banning astrologers from Italy (again).

[77] P. Rodríguez, 'Chérémon, Néron et l'Égypte hellénistique', in Y. Perrin (ed.), *Neronia VII. Rome, l'Italie et la Grèce: Hellénisme et philhellénisme au premier siècle ap. J.-C.* (Brussels, 2007) 50–73.

[78] Tacitus, *Histories* 2.78, with Potter, *Prophets and Emperors*, 175.

[79] Cassius Dio 65.9.2.

remaining narrowly tradition-bound, the elite used foreign cults as diplomatic tools, above all to bind the Hellenistic kingdoms to the empire. Nevertheless, these Eastern imports were not always uncontested or immediately assimilated. By virtue of the nature of our literary sources we know little about the reception of these Eastern cults and possible violent reactions against them among the common people. Nevertheless, we have argued that religious violence against some of them came mainly from members of the political elite acting in their own interests and not in accordance with any religious policy. Moreover, we have suggested that distinct political circumstances triggered the destruction of so-called foreign shrines in the case of the Isis cult and the political rhetoric of ridding the city of Rome from malign influences in the case of astrology. Thus it has been shown that one should always pay close attention to social and political circumstances in cases of 'religious violence'.[80]

As we have seen, acts of religious violence tended to be triggered when somebody stood to gain political advantage for pragmatic reasons. It is for this reason that old stereotypes, such as the strangeness of Ancient Egyptian religion with its dog-headed god Anubis, were used in the defamation of the cult under Augustus and in Juvenal's fifteenth satire, stereotypes which were eventually passed on to the Christian critics of these cults. In the same way, astrology was subject to restrictions and violent repression because astrological techniques, associated with unreliable street astrologers, could be used to create rumours which might destabilise the political regime. Since it was impossible to persecute all astrologers, it was important to carefully stage the public actions against them for maximum deterrence and to repeat or renew them when the effect wore off. Finally, when dealing with religious violence, the critical issue is not whether or not these cult practices really were a danger to society. The causes of the violence are to be found instead in the complex combination of (individual and public) perceptions of these practices with short-term and individual political goals of members of the ruling elite, and its will to demarcate identity boundaries to reach political goals.

[80] See the General Introduction, p. 4, and Kippenberg, p. 45, both this volume.

CHAPTER 5

Religious Violence? Two Massacres on a Sabbath in 66 CE: Jerusalem and Caesarea

Steve Mason

Introduction

In recent years a new debate has appeared in scholarship over the value of 'religion' as a category for studying the ancient Mediterranean world before its Christianisation. Although I have unwittingly become involved at the margins, I confess not to understand what is at stake for all participants. Whereas the debate usually proceeds on a theoretical or at least abstract level, a volume on 'religious violence' in Antiquity invites us to get down to cases. This chapter examines a pair of extremely violent incidents reported by Josephus for the year 66 CE, in Jerusalem and Caesarea, to ask what if anything makes them instances of *religious* violence, or how we might better understand what happened if we called it 'religious' behaviour. Before turning to the double episode in Josephus' *War*, I would like to spell out my limited understanding of the stakes in using or declining religion language for the first century.

Context, Method and Possible Stakes

In 1962, shortly before Religious Studies exploded as a discipline in North American universities and the American Academy of Religion took shape, one of the twentieth century's trail-blazing comparative religionists, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, published *The Meaning and End of Religion*. The title is paradoxical because Smith argued that 'religion', which only crystallised as a function of the West's reifying propensities in viewing others, is 'confusing, unnecessary, and distorting' for most purposes. It 'should be dropped' in academic study, and he already found it disappearing in specialist use.[1] His *tour de force* included a detailed chapter on the development of Latin *religio*, from Antiquity through to modern times,

[1] W. C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York, 1962) 48, 59–63.

and an insightful discussion of the ancient world, which included the lapidary observation: 'What was missing in classical Greece is any concept for a religion as a systematic or historical entity – as discriminated either from another such entity, or from other areas of social life'.[2]

As an undergraduate in one of the still-new departments of Religious Studies (at McMaster) in the late 1970s, I was puzzled that lectures in courses on Indian and Chinese religious traditions resembled history classes. In the tutorials we would discuss texts from each period, as we rolled through the centuries. I once mustered the courage to convey my puzzlement to Paul Younger, who taught the India course: 'This is all *really* interesting, though not what I had expected. At some point are we going to stop and discuss *what Hinduism actually believes*?' Professor Younger was kind enough not to guffaw, but encouraged me to go with the flow. Fortunately, I never did learn what Hinduism believes. By the MA, I had found Smith's book and thus discovered that my professors were on the vanguard, favouring the understanding of texts and events in their particular contexts, without assimilating them to the distortions of covering categories.[3] Eventually, realising that also in my major field, Judaism and Christian origins, we spent our time trying to understand texts in historical contexts, and that this was thrilling, I decided to become a historian rather than a religiologist. The study of religion seemed to lack either a distinct object or a method. The much-pondered study of the human past provided the balance I sought between clear purpose and infinite variety. It could include religion, or not-religion, as the subject material required.[4]

Research on the ancient West has proved remarkably resistant to Smith's insights. Books billed as studies of Greek and/or Roman 'religion' are not the main issue here, because such titles are convenient hooks for prospective readers. The authors are usually quick to explain that the

[2] Ibid., 53.

[3] Y.-L. Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. D. Bodde (New York, 1948) 1–6. Fung allows that Chinese society came to host coherent systems with 'superstitions, dogmas, rituals, and institutions', his perception of what constituted religions (p. 3). But Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were first ways of philosophy (systematic and reflective thinking about life), free of religion's attributes. He develops these points in his two-volume *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, 1952–53). J. A. Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago, 2012). Cf. T. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or: How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, 2005).

[4] My article, 'Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007) 457–512 cites and takes for granted the insights of Smith and others on 'religion', as a firm foundation for exploring 'Judaism' and 'Jew/Judaean' – in part challenging the argument that *Ioudaios* had taken on a religious meaning.

ancient world had no category corresponding to our religion; their goal is clearly to understand the ancients on their terms.[5] Anything having to do with ancient Jews or Christians, however, seems to require the introduction of 'religion' as an analytical category, as though the ancients defined their lives in relation to it. Perhaps because these fields were long incubated apart from other ancient history, in Europe's theology faculties and American seminaries and later Religious Studies departments, they continue to be treated as two 'religions' – whether mother and daughter, legal and illegal, missionary or non-missionary, in any case 'systems' or 'patterns of religion' that one gets in, stays in, or leaves.

Our instinct to sublimate human life in this corner of the Orient is particularly striking when it comes to politics and warfare. Although Greeks and Romans suffused their military operations with what we call religious rituals (e.g. sacrifice, purifications and temple-vowing), we do not call the Persian, Peloponnesian, Carthaginian, Macedonian or Achaean wars 'religious'. When Judaeans fought, however, it must have been a religious or even holy war. We hold them immune from the normal human motives of fear and anger, or conflicts with neighbours, preferring to see them as a nation in thrall to, and motivated by, an abstract theology of chosenness-cum-apocalyptic messianism. Vasily Rudich's trilogy of books about dissent under Nero illustrates this phenomenon. The first two studies are about normal, human, social-political dissent, even among the super-religious Romans. When he turns to Judaea, however, he titles the volume *Religious Dissent in the Roman Empire*, because he is sure that 'Judaism . . . belonged among the best-organized religions of the ancient world'.[6] This assumption encourages him to think that 'religious dissent' sprang from a different mentality from that of its political cousin. It does not explain, however, why most ancient Jews – even in Galilee and Peraea, let alone the large Judaean minorities throughout the Eastern Mediterranean – did not involve themselves in Jerusalem's problems with Nero's later procurators. Rudich notices that Josephus, our only source for most of the events, uses common political rather than 'religious' language, but concludes that he

[5] E.g. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA, 1985) 8: 'ritual and myth are the two forms in which Greek religion presents itself to the historian of religion'; J. Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Bloomington, 2003) 18–29, focusing on sacrifice; cf. pp. 79–110; J. B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2007) 13–53, separating out spheres of Roman life in which 'religious' phenomena might be found.

[6] V. Rudich, *Religious Dissent in the Roman Empire: Violence in Judaea at the Time of Nero* (London, 2015) 10. Cf. N. Faulkner, *Apocalypse: The Great Jewish Revolt against Rome, AD 66–73* (Stroud, 2004) – religion with class struggle; R. Firestone, *Holy War in Judaism* (Oxford, 2012), taking the first revolt as a paradigm of divinely sanctioned conflict.

must have suppressed the true religious dimensions of the Judaean War.[7] Popular culture – *Ben-Hur*, *Life of Brian*, the TV series *Rome* – has often agreed with scholarship in presenting Romans as cool realists who understand only power and think religion sentimental or worse, whereas Jews appear as devotees of religion detached from grubby politics.

This religious reflex in studying ancient Judaea has come home to me in reactions to my 2016 book, *A History of the Jewish War*.[8] Although that study discusses the piety of all parties to the conflict, themes of pollution and purification, and the temple's sanctity, it does not resort to 'religion' as a category because I do not find such language in ancient texts. Moreover, its trunk is a series of investigations into particular problems, such as: Why did Cestius Gallus take a legion to Jerusalem in October 66, and why did Jerusalemites respond as they did? What were Flavian and Judaean aims in relation to Galilee, Jerusalem (70 CE) and the desert fortresses (72–74 CE)? When discussing the predicament of Nero's legate in Antioch or the fear felt by those who welcomed Vespasian in Galilee or fled to Machaerus in the desert, I saw no occasion on which invoking 'religion' was either necessary or helpful.

In a 2018 Jerusalem conference responding to my book, nevertheless, the most consistent criticism (in three papers) was that I had ignored the *religious* causes of the war. I had anticipated the criticism because two of the more appreciative published reviews of the book had voiced a similar concern. One author reflected:

> One final and cautious concern should be raised: the almost total exclusion of religion as a force of any kind within the progression of the war . . . [T]he conflict at Caesarea, which exploded when Greek citizens performed a mock sacrifice outside a synagogue, *began explicitly through religious conflict*, even though there were certainly political questions underlying the choices made. *Josephus pays great attention to what he sees* as conflicts rooted in *religious difference* . . .[9]

The other: 'I would argue that for the Jews, as for ancient peoples generally (though not for us moderns), nothing was more realist or more human than religion. For just this reason, *they often expressed* other, ostensibly more realist ideas *in the language of religion*'.[10]

[7] Rudich, *Religious Dissent*, xxiv.
[8] S. Mason, *A History of the Jewish War, AD 66–74* (Cambridge, 2016).
[9] U. Westwood, review of Mason, *History of the Jewish War*, in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 68 (2017) 189–93 (quote at pp. 192–93; emphasis added).
[10] M. V. Novenson, review of Mason, in *BMCR* 2017.02.51 (emphasis added).

Clearly, we all need to talk, as we seem to be reading different texts. The authors' confidence that Josephus and other ancient authors couched political issues in *religious* language, or that the troubles in Caesarea – which were crucial in generating the war – were 'explicitly . . . religious', provides an opportunity for clarification, and my main motive for this study.

Before we turn to the texts, two other contexts need to be mentioned. In different ways, they seem to bring forward the potential stakes.[11] First, Smith's book inspired Brent Nongbri's *Before Religion* (2013). A more comprehensive and radical account of the concept's historical development, this book includes a compelling chapter on the modern creation of 'ancient religion' and argues for relinquishing even 'religious', which Smith accepted, as an unhelpful anachronism.[12] Carlin Barton and Daniel Boyarin soon complemented Nongbri's work with a detailed study of the Greek and Latin terms most likely to be rendered 'religion', *threskeia* and *religio*, in *Imagine No Religion* (2016).[13] Their aim was to make 'an incommensurable thought world comprehensible' by exploring the semantic ranges of these terms from alien cultures, without obfuscation from our lexical habits.[14]

Anders Klostergaard Petersen's *BMCR* review of Barton and Boyarin exposes at least some of the roots of mutual misunderstanding:

> First, obviously there was no concept of male chauvinism in the ancient world, but does that imply the *non-existence of the phenomenon*? Definitely not. Second, how could one possibly tell that there was no concept of religion in the ancient world if one does not subscribe to a concept and an undergirding definition of the phenomenon? . . . Frankly I do not see how we could or should avoid it in order to know what we are talking about. And if one defines religion as, for instance, 'semantic and cognitive networks comprising ideas, behaviours, and institutions in relation to counter-intuitive superhuman agents, objects and posits', I do not understand how this may be conceived *as an imposition on ancient religion* in our understanding of it, since applied in the context of pre-modern religion it only involves acknowledging the conflation between culture and religion.[15]

[11] See, for this scholarship, also the General Introduction, p. 3, Bendlin, pp. 140–41, Rives, p. 177, and Mayer, pp. 257–58, all this volume.

[12] B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, 2013).

[13] C. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York, 2016).

[14] Ibid., 6.

[15] A. K. Petersen, review of Barton and Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion*, in *BMCR* 2017.06.14 (emphasis added). See the similar argument for 'Judaism' in S. Schwartz, 'How Many Judaisms Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization', *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 2 (2011) 203–38.

It seems that Petersen's disagreement is more about methodological assumptions than substantive interpretation. His assumption that one cannot say whether some X was present unless one first defines that X sounds reasonable, but only if it is a pre-agreed rule of the game that we are all looking for *abstractions*, which would indeed require definition. That is not Barton and Boyarin's game, however. They are looking at literary survivals from Antiquity to explore the *langue* in which they communicated, to see how their authors conceived of their world and communicated with each other about it. For this purpose, Barton and Boyarin have no need to define what is *not* there, any more than one would need to define 'health-care', 'pension' or 'public-school' systems to observe that these were not part of ancient discourse. Their simpler point, which builds on Nongbri's elaborate exploration of the 'modern concept' of religion (in turn building on Smith and a formerly common view), is that invoking the modern concept – *however* one defines it – is anachronistic and bound to mislead. It is also unnecessary, if one is simply trying to understand the world of the ancient texts.

Two Massacres: Josephus' *War*

In his *Judaean War* (2.450–57) Josephus tells the remarkable story of two simultaneous massacres, with aggressors and victims reversed. One was in Jerusalem, where Judaean militants cut down the military garrison, the other in Caesarea, where the Graeco-Syrian majority killed or expelled Judaeans resident there. The passage is brief enough to quote with minor omissions:

> Although the populace [of Jerusalem] urged repeatedly that the siege be raised, in consideration of the soldiers . . ., they [Eleazar's faction] applied themselves ever more harshly until Metilius' group – he was the prefect of the Romans – could hold out no longer. They sent word to Eleazar's group, asking only for their lives under a truce, saying that they would surrender their weapons with the rest of their property. The others seized on this plea and . . . gave them the pledge as well as oaths . . . and Metilius led his soldiers down [from the Herodian palace towers].
>
> As long as they had weapons around, none of the insurgents made a move on them. . . . But when, in keeping with the agreements, they all put down their shields and swords and began to withdraw, suspecting nothing more, Eleazar's group rushed at them, surrounded them, and made away with them – men neither defending themselves nor begging for mercy, but only crying out: 'The agreements!' and 'The oaths!' In this way they were all savagely butchered, then, except Metilius. Him alone they preserved,

> because he had begged for mercy and promised to Judaise, going as far as circumcision.
>
> On the Roman side the suffering was light, in that from a boundless force a few were expended, but still among Judaeans it seemed a prologue to capture (προοίμιον ἁλώσεως). Perceiving that the justifications for the [coming] war were already beyond healing, and that the city had been defiled with such pollution that it was reasonable to expect some otherworldly wrath (τηλικούτῳ μιάσματι πεφυρμένην, ἐξ οὗ δαιμόνιόν τι μήνιμα προσδοκᾶν εἰκὸς ἦν), even if not retaliation from the Romans, the Judaeans began a public mourning ... For it happened that the slaughter was committed on a Sabbath, on which for the sake of worship they observe a moratorium even on pious activities.
>
> On the very same day and at the same time, just as from some otherworldly provision (ἐκ δαιμονίου προνοίας), Caesareans began doing away with the Judaeans among them. Thus more than 20,000 were butchered within a single hour. All Caesarea was emptied of Judaeans, for [the procurator Gessius] Florus arrested those who were trying to escape and took them down into the dockyards as prisoners.[16]

Given Josephus' habit of portraying violence in sometimes gory detail, his restraint here adds to the ominous feeling. Such glaring atrocities need no elaboration, but they cannot be the end.

Nor will they be. A few paragraphs later, C. Cestius Gallus, the legate of Syria, is hurrying a large expeditionary force from Antioch to Jerusalem, in hopes of calming the situation (*War* 2.499). The recent expulsion of his friend King Agrippa II from Jerusalem (2.406) forced him to action, and now the slaughter of the garrison adds urgency. Fierce Judaean strikes against Syrian *poleis* in retaliation for Caesarea, and the actions of those cities in turn, against their Judaean minorities, are setting the whole southern region of his province aflame (2.458–80). His effort to pacify the region, however, will paradoxically become the crucial event in igniting the coming war.[17] After angry young Judaeans devastate his departing Twelfth Legion in an ambush, Nero will assign the task of pacifying Judaea to (the future emperor) Vespasian (3.1–5), who will soon be magnifying his success there as legitimation of his claim on power.

The brief passage above is thus a linch-pin of Josephus' *War*. But how did these violent events come about? To what extent do the massacres reflect Judaean antipathy towards imperial Rome? Above all, are they examples of *religious* violence? Where should we find, or supply, 'religion',

[16] All translations in this chapter are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[17] See M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London, 2007) 9–14, 392–99; Mason, *History of the Jewish War*, 281–334.

and how would that help us to understand these events, or at least the literary episodes in the narratives of Josephus? These questions we shall now explore, first broaching the thorny problem of the relationship between narratives, including those of Josephus, and lived reality.

Narrative and Real Life – Generally and in Caesarea

Real life and narrative are different things. This is not a postmodern claim. It has been obvious at least since Homer invoked the Muse to help him sing of Odysseus.[18] It is why Cicero pleaded with the orator L. Lucceius to write the history of his consulship, from Cicero's 'notes', and why Josephus declined to include the ancient past in *War* – so as to leave that work symmetrically balanced.[19] Narratives are artistic creations with structures (beginnings, middles, ends), thematic palettes, characterisation of selected *dramatis personae*, and the other features of 'a good story'. Our lives do not unfold as elements of a story falling into place. We do construct narratives for our lives at various points. But 'the story' of our childhood, university days or a relationship is not fixed or given. It will change with each retelling in longer perspective.

The inability of events to declare their meaning is the reason for history – and criminal investigation, a quotidian application of historical thinking. Because the past does not generate a single story, if we want to know what happened we must launch a methodical investigation. An example is the 'quest of the historical Jesus'. For two centuries or more, scholars have been ingeniously imagining the lost figure of Jesus, who could have given rise to the highly varied traditions and disputes about him. That figure cannot simply be inferred from an 'accurate' narrative. So also in general, historians cannot make life so easy for themselves as to find a trustworthy narrative and sit on it. This is not because narrators are liars or incompetents, though they may be, but because stories and real life are different things.[20]

We are now interested in what happened, in ancient Jerusalem and Caesarea, to produce the dual massacres described by Josephus. We notice immediately that the passage above is not transparent of real life, but obviously part of a crafted narrative. Most obvious is the repetition of δαιμόνιος ('other-worldly'), Josephus' non-explanation of both the

[18] Homer, *Odyssey* 1.1. [19] Cicero, *To Acquaintances* 5.12; Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.6–7.
[20] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1994) 378; cf. the extensive section on criticism of sources in M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien* (Paris, 1949) 35–67.

Jerusalemites' fear of retaliation and the timing of the Caesarean massacre (2.455, 457). *War* has this adjective thirty times in its seven volumes, using it for eerie or providential events, which are often crucial to the story's progression but beyond human accounting.[21] Accordingly, in this work the neuter substantive τὸ δαιμόνιον refers nearly always to God or Providence, rather than an intermediate spirit as in other texts.[22] Since Josephus' later works make no such use of this thematic language, the events themselves could not have generated it.[23] It is part of *War*'s constructed narrative only.

Other telltale signs of art include: Josephus' characteristic psychologising, which has the Judaeans discern a 'prologue to capture';[24] Metilius' 'Judaising', which anticipates a coming observation on the same phenomenon in Syria (*War* 2.463); a typical expository remark on the Sabbath; the presence of one of Josephus' favourite words, θρησκεία ('worship');[25] and *War*'s characteristic language of butchery and savagery. While we are at it, I might mention 'strength of bodies', from an earlier passage on Caesarea (below), as one of many distinctive traits of this writer and of *War* in particular.[26]

[21] Josephus, *War* 1.*69*, 82, 84, 331, 370, 373, 376, 613; our two occurrences here; 3.*341*, 485, 4.34, *76*, 217, *501*, *622*, 649, 5.377, *502*; 6.59, *252*, *296*, 303, 429, 7.82, 120, 159, 185, *318*. The italicised references are significant turning points in the story.

[22] Only at ibid., 7.185, does the substantive (plural) refer to demons.

[23] Josephus, *Antiquities* (2.5 times the length of *War*) has δαιμόνιος only twelve times, normally following the LXX in referring to malign spirits or demons (e.g. 6.166–68, 8.45–48). The unthematised providential sense comes in the part that parallels *War* (*Antiquities* 13.314, 16.76–77, 19.60).

[24] 'Capture' (ἅλωσις) occurs forty-five times from Josephus, *War* 1.10 to 7.407. This usage is so characteristic that the work was known among Church Fathers as Περὶ ἁλώσεως: Origen, *Fragmenta in Lamentationes* 105, 109 (*GCS* 6bis, pp. 273–74); Pseudo-Theodoret, *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos* 119 (p. 111 Papadopoulos-Kerameus); Procopius, *Commentarius in Isaiam* (*PG* 87, col. 1837); cf. the title of Pseudo-Hegesippus' fourth-century Latin reworking, *De excidio hierosolymitano*.

[25] Josephus has the noun 101 times (114 times all cognates), though in all extant Greek literature before him it appears only 22 times. On Josephus' concern to explain Sabbath, see *War* 1.146 (narrative antecedent here), 2.517; *Antiquities* 1.33, 3.143, 11.346, 12.4, 259, 276–77, 13.352, 14.264; *Life of Josephus* 159, 275; *Against Apion* 2.20–27.

[26] Josephus, *War* 2.268; cf. 2.376, 476, 580, 4.503, 6.55, 81, 331, 7.232; note also 2.60; *Antiquities* 6.21, 17.278. The phrase ἀλκὴ σώματος is rarely attested before Josephus; this counts as characteristic. The plural here (σωμάτων ἀλκή) could be construed as either collective manpower (numerical superiority) or physical strength, as at nearby 2.376: the Germans are renowned for the strength and size of their bodies. Likewise at 2.580, strength of body and exaltation of soul have allowed the Romans to master the inhabited earth. The parallel account mentions only the Judaeans' wealth (*Antiquities* 20.175). Although L. I. Levine, 'The Jewish–Greek Conflict in First Century Caesarea', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25 (1974) 382–83, and L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, 1993) 119–20, take the phrase to indicate numerical growth, the German parallel illustrates ancient

War's account of the massacres and the events that produced and followed them is thus a one-off artistic production. This is why historians have no business declaring such an account 'reliable' or the opposite. A story may be brilliant, carefully researched and planned, and suited to the author's (chiefly moral) purposes, but it cannot take the place of our investigation into what happened. Nor can we justify throwing up our hands and saying: 'Well, this is all we have, so we must follow it' – any more than we would declare sea water drinkable if it were the only drink available outside our lifeboat. Deuteronomy 19:15 already put the principle clearly: 'A single witness shall not suffice to implicate a person in any crime . . .; only on the word of two witnesses, or better on the word of three, shall a claim be substantiated'. Where we have only one source, we should adopt a critical nescience, or 'not knowing' – to revive a word from Samuel Johnson's old *Dictionary* that lacks the baggage of 'agnosticism' – until we can make a plausible case.[27]

The life–narrative distinction looks even brighter when we realise that Josephus composed two very different accounts of pre-70 Judaea. His later *Judaean Antiquities* has a different structure and theme-set, with a correspondingly new literary style and diction. Pre-war events in Caesarea are among those he relates in a new way. Before I survey those different accounts, I jump to the most impressive divergence: *War*'s massacres make no appearance in the parallel account in *Antiquities*. This observation forces us to realise that narrative structures and dramatic 'climaxes' are also properties of stories, not of life as we live it. Now to the two stories.

War makes clear, in its account of Caesarea's founding by King Herod, what sort of place the king envisaged. It was to be a grand Graeco-Roman *polis*: a boon to sailors working the Levantine coast, a centre of imperial cult for Augustus and Rome, and a gift to the province of Syria (1.414). Its world-class harbours, temples and entertainment facilities would make it a regional centre for quinquennial games (1.408–15). Although little more than an hour's drive from Jerusalem today, in the first century the 120 km distance required three or four days' walking. No less than Gaza, Ascalon, Dora, Ptolemais or Scythopolis, Caesarea was a different cultural universe from Judaea's highlands. Archaeology has amply confirmed that it was a

assumptions about varying degrees of physical vigour among the *ethne*. The Judaeans' advantage in 'strength of bodies' better matches the story: they are a minority, but their youth prevail in fights and can be restrained only by military forces (*War* 2.286).

[27] S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 6th ed., vol. 2 (London, 1785) s.v.

flourishing trading hub[28] – just the sort of place from which Josephus distances Judaeans, because of the cultural mingling that maritime trade implies.[29] H. K. Beebe proposed that Herod built Caesarea as a counterweight to the Judaean mother-*polis*, which since Hasmonean times had controlled the much smaller port of Joppa.[30]

Given this background, which is clear enough in *War* without the supporting archaeology, it comes as a surprise to read that in the late 50s:

> A different kind of disturbance involving Caesarea compounded matters, when the Judaeans who were mixed in there formed a faction against the Syrians (τῶν ἀναμεμιγμένων Ἰουδαίων πρὸς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ Σύρους στασιασάντων). They demanded that the *polis* was really theirs, saying that its *founder* had been a Judaean (οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἠξίουν σφετέραν εἶναι τὴν πόλιν Ἰουδαῖον γεγονέναι τὸν κτίστην αὐτῆς λέγοντες) – this was Herod the king – whereas the others [Graeco-Syrians], though they readily conceded that the *coloniser* was a Judaean (τὸν οἰκιστὴν . . . Ἰουδαῖον), nevertheless insisted that the *polis* was in fact one of Greeks. For if he [Herod] had dedicated it to Judaeans, he would not have set up statues and shrines. Because of these issues the two sides were in dispute.
>
> Their rivalry progressed to weapons, as every day the more spirited ones from both sides kept plunging into battle. The senior Judaeans were not able to restrain their agitators, and to the Greeks it seemed a disgrace to be in a weaker position than the Judaeans. The latter had the advantage in wealth and in strength of bodies (προεῖχον δ' οἱ μὲν πλούτῳ καὶ σωμάτων ἀλκῇ), the Greek side in protection by the soldiers – for the bulk of the military force there had been enlisted by the Romans from Syria. Just as relatives are, they were ready for acts of assistance.[31]

Josephus thus gives the violence in Caesarea a clear, if extraordinary, cause. As Lee Levine put it, 'we find a Jewish community daring to seek control of a Graeco-Roman city, an attempt without parallel in Antiquity'.[32] Josephus does not explain why Judaeans made such a bold effort, or

[28] R. L. Vann (ed.), *Caesarea Papers: Straton's Tower, Herod's Harbour, and Roman and Byzantine Caesarea* (Ann Arbor, 1992); Y. Porath, 'Herod's "Amphitheatre" at Caesarea: A Multipurpose Entertainment Building', in J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research* (Ann Arbor, 1995) 15–27; A. Raban and K. G. Holum (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (Leiden, 1996); G. Alföldy, 'Pontius Pilatus und das Tiberieum von Caesarea Maritima', *SCI* 18 (1999) 85–108; K. G. Holum, A. Raban and J. Patrich (eds.), *Caesarea Papers 2: Herod's Temple, the Provincial Governor's Praetorium and Granaries, the Later Harbor, a Gold Coin Hoard, and Other Studies* (Portsmouth, RI, 1999).

[29] Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.60.

[30] H. K. Beebe, 'Caesarea Maritima: Its Strategic and Political Importance to Rome', *JNES* 42 (1983) 195–207.

[31] Josephus, *War* 2.166–68 (emphasis added).

[32] Levine, 'Jewish–Greek Conflict', 387.

thought it would succeed, other than his remark that they enjoyed superior wealth and 'strength of bodies'. Nor does he explain what it would mean concretely to make Caesarea Judaean – presumably, dismantling its colossal statues, temples and defining institutions. I have proposed elsewhere that the move could be understood as what the realist school of political science calls a balancing effort. The threat of an increasingly confident auxiliary, nurtured in the foreign environs of Caesarea – no longer under Jerusalem's control – could be offset by making Caesarea also Judaean.[33]

However that may be, this passage reveals two points that mostly lie beneath the surface in *War*'s narrative. First, although *War* is usually content to call the auxiliary force 'Roman',[34] perhaps to emphasise in hindsight the consequences of acting against this component of Rome's military system, our passage acknowledges that the soldiers were locally recruited – as auxiliary cohorts were – in this case from populations long hostile to Jerusalem. *Antiquities* is more revealing in this vein. There, the premature death of the Judaean King Agrippa I (44 CE) prompts unseemly celebrations in Caesarea and Sebaste. The people's exuberance has to do, Josephus explains, with the large number of their family members serving in the auxiliary, which was under Jerusalem's command while the king lived.[35] Since he might have ruled for decades, his unexpected death sparks riotous joy from the soldiery. The Emperor Claudius, indignant on behalf of his late friend, threatens to remove those units to the Black Sea. *Antiquities* claims that because they were not removed in the end, the auxiliary soldiers 'sowed the seeds of war and became the source of the greatest calamities for Judaeans under Florus'.[36] *War* is not clear about this background, so the critical reader must pay attention to incidental clues, such as the notice I have quoted.

Second, although *War* (2.117) states that Judaea became a Roman province in 6 CE, the incidental remark at 2.268 that the auxiliary were recruited 'from Syria' agrees with other indicators that Judaea was in fact now part of Syria, hence the responsibility of the legate in Antioch. *Antiquities*, again departing from *War*'s formulations, will state unambiguously that Judaea was annexed to Syria in 6 CE.[37]

The next part of *War*'s account of Caesarea elaborates points made in the opening paragraph above. The prefect Felix intervenes in one

[33] S. Mason, 'Why Did Judaeans Go to War with Rome in 66–67 CE? Realist-Regional Perspectives', in P. J. Tomson and J. Schwartz (eds.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their Histories* (Leiden, 2014) 126–206, esp. pp. 199–201.
[34] E.g. Josephus, *War* 2.296, 308, 320, 321, 326, 329. [35] Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.356–66.
[36] Ibid., 19.366. [37] Ibid., 17.354, 18.1–2.

brawl, which the Judaeans are winning, and demands that they withdraw. When they refuse, he orders their fighters killed and wealthy Judaean homes plundered (2.270). Still, he has the fairness to dispatch representatives of both sides to Nero, to settle the issue of the city's character definitively and end the strife. Will Nero accede to the Judaeans' claim that the *polis* is theirs?

Josephus often heightens drama by suspending a developing story to explore other matters before returning to it. So it is here. When we next hear of Caesarea, two more procurators (about six years) have come and gone. Nero's unsurprising verdict, when it finally arrives while Gessius Florus is procurator, is that Caesarea will remain Greek; Judaeans must not treat it as their *polis*. Josephus carefully dates this news – because he reckons it a foundation of the war – to May/June 66 CE (2.284). But now he must explain how it led to war. For it was not Nero's announcement as such, which only confirmed the status quo, but circumstances around it that sparked regional conflict.

Namely, in the interval while awaiting Nero's decision, wealthier Judaeans have been buying up contiguous plots of land. Whether from misplaced confidence in the imperial decision or as a hedge against the expected rejection of their initiative, they offer sums well above market value. So confident are they of making the *polis* theirs, one way or another, that they erect a meeting place (συναγωγή) right at the edge of one property, presumably expecting to buy the adjacent field. But their stubborn neighbour not only refuses to sell. He defiantly builds or develops workshops along the edge of his property, leaving the Judaeans a narrow passageway to their building.

The Judaeans try another tack. In exchange for a huge personal bribe, of eight talents, they try to secure Florus' backing. But Florus takes their money and absconds, leaving the parties to sort things out. This local spat, Josephus claims in *War*, remarkably generates conflict with Rome. How could that happen? The emboldened neighbour, after Nero's clear declaration, exploits his advantage. He further aggravates the Judaeans by sacrificing birds on a makeshift altar, which they must file past on their way to meetings. A lethal riot ensues, and this time the Judaeans get the worst of it. Seeing Florus' fecklessness, and aware of their vulnerability after Nero's rescript, they remove their laws from Caesarea for safe-keeping and prepare for the worst. Florus has the gall to arrest leading Judaeans also for this (2.291–92).

This turn of events also explains how the Caesarean situation comes to concern Jerusalem. For the Judaean capital's residents must deal with the

same Florus, and they are shocked by his treatment of Caesarea. His insults in Jerusalem itself include taking another seventeen talents from the temple treasury (citing Nero's needs), along with the eight from Caesarea (2.293).

The next we hear of Caesarea is Josephus' notice at *War* 2.457, in the passage at the head of this chapter. The Syrian majority massacre an alleged twenty thousand Judaeans in a single hour. This creates outrage in Jerusalem, causing Judaeans to fan out in parties and attack other southern *poleis* – adding urgency to Cestius' expedition, underway in September–October 66.

Antiquities (20.173–84) lacks not only the concluding massacre and these retaliatory strikes, but also *War*'s entire explanation of how Nero's decision generated conflict. The land purchase and the offending sacrifices are missing. The few points of agreement with *War* come in the opening frame. Here too, the Judaean minority initiate civic strife by attempting to change the status quo:

> Whereas the Judaeans were asserting their primacy, on the ground that the founder of Caesarea had been their king . . ., the Syrians conceded the point about Herod but insisted that Caesarea had formerly been called Strato's Tower, and at that time there had been not a single Judaean inhabitant . . . The Judaeans who were in the *polis*, made confident by their wealth and on that account holding the Syrians in contempt, kept slandering them, expecting to provoke them to anger. The latter, though inferior in resources, were in high spirits because most of those doing military service there under the Romans were either Caesareans or Sebastenes, and so took to abusing the Judaeans with words for a while. Then they began throwing stones at each other, until many were injured on both sides – though the Judaeans would surely win.[38]

On that similar foundation, however, *Antiquities* builds a different story. To begin with, the prefect Felix is no longer *War*'s even-handed referee, sending both sides to Nero. *Antiquities* portrays Judaeans prevailing in all the fights with their neighbours. Here, therefore, Felix's main concern is to get the Judaeans to desist. When they do not, he executes some and takes many others prisoner, while allowing his eager auxiliaries, clearly identified here as hailing from the area, to ransack Judaean houses. In this account, when the Judaean leaders beg him to stop and promise to rein in their youth, Felix accepts their pledge and the matter is settled. No appeal to Nero is needed (20.177–78).

[38] Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.173–76.

Antiquities has the next procurator, Festus (59–62 CE?), allow Judaean dignitaries to visit Nero, but this is not to put their case concerning Caesarea. They want rather to accuse Felix because of the auxiliary's violence, which he authorised. There is no rival delegation from Caesarea. Notice incidentally the Judaeans' continued trust in the emperor's fairness and protection. Felix escapes punishment, Josephus claims, only because his brother Pallas still has influence with Nero (20.182).[39]

After the Judaean mission to prosecute Felix fails, *Antiquities* departs further from *War* by claiming that the Syrian Caesareans make a separate overture to Nero, via the corruptible imperial secretary Beryllus. They offer him a large bribe to induce Nero to cancel the Judaeans' 'equality of citizenship with them'.[40] The logic and language here imply that Caesarea's Judaeans already enjoy political rights, in a non-Judaean *polis* – a situation familiar from Antioch, Alexandria and Asian *poleis*.[41] Their effort to improve their lot by making the *polis* Judaean has provoked violent opposition (20.173). In this version, therefore, the Syrian population, perhaps inspired by the Judaeans' failure to prosecute Felix, press their advantage. They make the extraordinary request, requiring the resort to bribery, that the emperor annul the Judaeans' existing rights – an appeal paralleled in Alexandria and Antioch – as payback. Josephus does not spell this out clearly, but it seems the easiest way to understand his language.

In this version, it is this profound imperial insult, of removing the rights that had allowed Judaeans to prosper in Caesarea, that helps to generate the coming war:

> This [imperial letter] furnished the causes of the bad things that followed for our *ethnos*: for when the Judaeans of Caesarea learned what had been written, they engaged all the more in civil strife against the Syrians until indeed *they ignited the war* (μέχρι δὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐξῆψαν).[42]

[39] This is difficult on prosopographical grounds, a problem not diminished by Nikos Kokkinos' redating of Festus' tenure to 59–60: N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (Sheffield, 1998) 385. According to Tacitus, Pallas' influence was at its height around 52–54 CE under Claudius (*Annals* 12.53.1–2). Nero's accession cost him (*Annals* 13.2.2) and in 55 he was dismissed from court (*Annals* 13.14.2, 13.23.1–2). At the story time here, Pallas was reportedly near execution (62 CE; *Annals* 14.65.1).

[40] Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.183: ἀκυροῦσαν τὴν Ἰουδαίων πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἰσοπολιτείαν.

[41] In Josephus, *War* 7.110, the citizens of Antioch unsuccessfully beg Titus to annul Judaean rights there; cf. Claudius' famous letter to the Alexandrians (*P.Lond.* VI 1912), demanding that Alexandrians tolerate Judaeans while ordering Judaeans not to demand more, in a *polis* that is not theirs.

[42] Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.184 (emphasis added).

In *Antiquities*, Nero's decision arrives while Festus is prefect (to 60 or 62),[43] in contrast to *War*'s date of 66. Perhaps we should imagine that Caesarea's Judaeans then begin reacting to their loss of civic status by fomenting *stasis* there, and that the malfeasance of Albinus and Florus in Jerusalem will compound these Judaean grievances in the region – without the need of *War*'s massacre as cause.

Similar observations apply *mutatis mutandis* to *War*'s account of what led to the massacre in Jerusalem, a 'climax' that is also missing from the *Antiquities* narrative.

Conflict in Jerusalem – and Massacre

Jerusalem is *War*'s main interest, and almost everything that concerns us there comes in Book 2. But the work's preface already highlights the tragedy of the mother-*polis*' catastrophe: 'For it happened that our *polis*, of all those under the Romans, certainly reached the pinnacle of prosperity, only to fall again in the worst of calamities at the last'.[44]

The most obvious reason that Josephus includes such a long Book 1 – double his standard (15,000-word) *volumen* length – is to chart that long period of success from the beginning of Roman–Judaean relations. That volume ends with the death of Augustus' friend Herod, hence the end of unalloyed good times. As Book 2 opens, the air crackles with tension. What will become of Jerusalem, which has flourished so brilliantly under Rome? Josephus devotes considerable space to the succession hearings in Rome (2.1–111). Augustus does his best to honour the late king's wishes by installing his three sons over parts of the kingdom. Archelaus gets the heartland plus Samaria and the title of ethnarch – with the carrot of kingship if he governs well – while Antipas and Philip receive tetrarchies (2.93). Alas, the other two are successful and rule longer than their father, whereas Archelaus alienates both Jerusalem and Samaria, forcing Augustus to remove him within a decade (2.111).

In *War*'s formulation, as we have seen, Augustus now makes Judaea a province under an equestrian administrator.[45] *Antiquities* more plausibly reports that Judaea joined Syria at this point, I said earlier.[46] This is more plausible in part because *War* also assumes the northern legate's responsibility for Judaea, with: the legate Qurinius' census of 6 CE (2.433, 7.253);

[43] Ibid., 20.185, 197, 215. [44] Josephus, *War* 1.1.
[45] Josephus, *War* 2.117: εἰς ἐπαρχίαν περιγραφείσης ἐπίτροπος τῆς ἱππικῆς ... τάξεως.
[46] See p. 117 above.

Publius Petronius, the legate ordered to install Caligula's statues in the temple (2.185–203); Ummidius Quadratus' intervention against a rogue procurator and his auxiliary (2.239–44); and the ongoing concern of Cestius Gallus for Jerusalem (from 2.280). Indeed, *War* exploits the contrast between the distinguished ex-consuls in Antioch and the mixed bag of equestrian careerists in Caesarea to sustain its kinetic atmosphere. Whatever virtues the legate may have had, he was weeks away and likely to be seen in Jerusalem only during Passover visits. The character of the equestrian official based in Caesarea, commanding an auxiliary hostile to Jerusalem, is therefore crucial to *War*'s account.

The clearest example of what could go wrong, before the war, is furnished by the procurator Ventidius Cumanus. On his watch, an auxiliary soldier patrolling the temple's colonnade roof during Passover makes rude gestures towards the Judaeans below (2.224). A fatal riot ensues as the massed celebrants try to assault the soldier above them, while his comrades respond with their weapons. Under the same Cumanus, after Judaean bandits rob an imperial slave at Beit-Horon, an over-zealous soldier exceeds the procurator's order to find the culprits, gratuitously burning a copy of the Torah he finds in a village. Cumanus must mollify the Judaeans by executing this man (2.228). However, when a Galilean pilgrim en route to Jerusalem is murdered by Samarians, and Judaeans launch retaliatory raids against Samarian villages (2.232–35), Cumanus brings a fast-moving cavalry wing against them (2.236). The parallel in *Antiquities* 20.122 says that he took nearly the entire auxiliary force – four infantry cohorts plus one cavalry wing – and that he 'armed the Samarians' (τούς τε Σαμαρεῖς καθοπλίσας). This appears to mean that he armed civilians for protection from Judaean raids, in addition to leading the auxiliary force. Even in *War*'s version, this was clearly an eruption of the old hatred between Judaeans and Samarians.

In a revealing line, the elders of Jerusalem in *War* plead with the populace 'to not, for the sake of revenge *against the Samarians*, provoke *the Romans* [that is, the legate and his legionary forces] against Jerusalem'.[47] Both sides appeal to the legate Quadratus, who characteristically investigates, executes Judaean vigilante leaders and sends the key players to Claudius in Rome. The emperor, again characteristically, decides in favour of the Judaeans. Advised by Agrippa II, who is then resident in Rome and vehemently pleading the Judaean case (2.245), Claudius not only exiles

[47] Josephus, *War* 2.237: μὴ διὰ τὴν εἰς Σαμαρεῖς ἄμυναν ἐπὶ Ἱεροσόλυμα Ῥωμαίους παροξύνειν (emphasis added).

Cumanus; he even executes Samarian delegates. Most remarkably, he orders the commander held most responsible, a certain Celer, back to Jerusalem for torture and beheading *at Judaean hands* (2.239–46).

Although *War* does not clarify the inter-ethnic rivalry underlying Jerusalem's fall from happiness, then, a curious reader could join the dots. In this work Josephus prefers to focus on the character of the equestrian officials. With Rome itself the Judaeans never have a problem, before Nero's final years. To judge from Tacitus, this emphasis on the variable character of the men in Caesarea would have resonated with Josephus' audiences in Rome. Though no admirer of Judaeans, Tacitus remarks that the imperial freedman Felix behaved 'with every mark of barbarity and lust, and governed with the privilege of a king and the mindset of a slave. Nevertheless, the *patience of the Judaeans* held out until Gessius Florus was procurator'.[48] Even such distant observers could see that Judaea had recently been saddled with reprehensible specimens of this motley class.

Felix and Festus, whose tenures as procurator covered the decade from 52 to 62, we have met in connection with Caesarea. In spite of Tacitus' peevish remarks about Felix, *War* does not complain about him. His reported actions culminate in his dispatch of Judaean and Syrian disputants to Nero for a decision about their claims in Caesarea (2.270). In the Judaean heartland he has been on the side of the angels, doing his best to rid the country of the troublemakers Josephus also abhors: Judaean bandits terrorising Samarian borderlands (2.253)[49] and pseudo-prophets promising restored Judaean greatness. These last focus their ire on the auxiliary garrison in Jerusalem, perhaps hoping for another king such as Herod, Archelaus and Agrippa I to put the foreigners in their place (2.260, 263).

Antiquities' thematic moralising about the fate of those who observe or violate Judaean law (1.14, 20) leads that work instead to explore Felix's lust – mentioned also in Tacitus' *Histories* and suggested in the New Testament Acts – in snatching Agrippa's sister Drusilla from her virtuous husband (20.142–44).[50] *Antiquities* also explains why *War* (2.254–57) dates the rise of urban knife crime to Felix's time and separately notes that its first victim was the high priest Jonathan. In *Antiquities*, knife crime became popular in Jerusalem because Jonathan began to criticise Felix – feeling responsible for him because he had asked Claudius to send this man.

[48] Tacitus, *Histories* 5.10 (emphasis added).

[49] If Eleazar, the bandit ring-leader here who has been active for two decades, should be understood as the Eleazar son of Deinaeus recently mentioned in Josephus, *War* 2.235, as *Antiquities* 20.161 clarifies.

[50] Tacitus, *Histories* 5.9; Acts 24:24–25.

He charges that the increasingly self-indulgent Felix does not care about Judaea's interests (20.162). Felix contrives to get rid of his nagging sponsor by ordering his assassination, with hired knife assassins. Their success leads to copycat stabbings, and this accounts for the rash of knife crime under Felix in *Antiquities*.

It seems that Josephus knew all this when he composed *War*, but chose not to complicate his scheme there of a late-breaking catastrophe in Nero's later years. There, Felix does what a competent prefect should do, while the knife crime is incidentally dated to his tenure. *War*'s appreciative tone towards Felix is strengthened by its notice about his successor [Porcius] Festus (59/60–62 or 58–60), who behaves in the same way – 'he arrested the majority of the bandits and actually did away with quite a few' – which prepares for the radical change he attributes to Albinus and Florus: 'Albinus did *not govern affairs in the same manner*, and there was no conceivable form of sordid behaviour that he neglected'.[51]

A Roman audience might have assumed this man to be the Lucceius Albinus whom Nero would later dispatch to Mauretania, where he reportedly claimed royal prerogatives and died in the civil war after Nero's death.[52] In any case, they would have understood that the story time here is after Nero's transition of 59–60 CE, marked by his murder of his mother, sidelining of advisers, and urgent demand for revenue from Italy and the provinces.[53] Albinus devotes himself single-mindedly to raising money: he plunders the wealth of individuals and allegedly raises tax levies on the whole *ethnos*; he strikes bargains to release bandit-leaders and empty holding cells on payment of sufficient ransom (2.273). He thus creates a lawless atmosphere in which rival malcontents cause mayhem while virtuous leading citizens, ripe for plunder by both governor and gangs, are forced into silence. Josephus remarks that Albinus left the region with 'the seeds of the coming capture' sown in Jerusalem.[54]

War's audience realises by now that the auxiliary force is the procurator's muscle. The degree of harm they can cause depends on the nature of this commander, which is why ordinary Judaeans long for a Judaean monarch again in Jerusalem. With Gessius Florus (63/64–66 CE), the epitome of the late-Neronian governor, *War* dramatically slows the

[51] Josephus, *War* 2.271–72. [52] Tacitus, *Histories* 2.58–59.
[53] W. Eck, 'Die römischen Repräsentanten in Judaea: Provokateure oder Vertreter der römischen Macht?', in M. Popović (ed.), *The Jewish Revolt against Rome* (Leiden, 2011) 45–68 at 61–65; Mason, *History of the Jewish War*, 315–18.
[54] Josephus, *War* 2.276: τὰ σπέρματα τῆς μελλούσης ἁλώσεως.

narrative to elaborate on dynamics unexplored until now. We shall focus on those that lead to the massacre of the Jerusalem garrison.

War's programmatic contrast between the beneficence of the senatorial legate in Antioch, who is now Cestius Gallus (from 65 CE), and questionable equestrians or freedmen in the south reaches its high point in the brazenly rapacious Florus. *War*'s audience may know what only *Antiquities* (20.252) explains: that Nero appointed Florus because his wife and Nero's wife were friends. Romans would certainly have understood the fear with which senators such as Cestius lived in Nero's final two years, after the Pisonian conspiracy and its aftershocks, as well as the boldness of Nero's equestrian emissaries in raiding provincial wealth – and informing on senators.[55]

Josephus does not develop these connections in *War*, but he highlights the character of Florus, as this opening tirade shows:

> He neglected no form of either plunder or torture. With those who deserved pity he was most savage, while among the shameful he was most shameless ... To him it seemed pointless to make his gains one man at a time; he was instead stripping whole cities and despoiling populations *en masse*. Up and down the countryside, he all but declared that everyone had leave to practise banditry – as long as he himself got a share of the war-spoils.[56]

Although there is every reason to see Florus' preoccupation with revenue as a result of Nero's orders (2.293), Josephus portrays it as a matter of personal greed (2.295, 311). The legate Cestius, by contrast, shows consistent respect for Jerusalem and its people, apparently making the long trek already during his first Passover in post (66 CE). As the procurator stands next to him, a massive crowd implores Cestius to deal with this egregious fellow. He promises that he will (2.280–83). Only a month later,[57] however, King Agrippa II's sister, Berenice, in Jerusalem to fulfil a vow, witnesses such atrocities and experiences such personal humiliation that she requests urgent help from Cestius against Florus (2.301). The legate hears a similar plea from Jerusalem's leaders, at the same time that he receives Florus' own self-exonerating appeal for help in suppressing an alleged Judaean rebellion.

[55] See previous note and Mason, *History of the Jewish War*, 318–24. [56] Josephus, *War* 2.277–78.

[57] Cestius is in Jerusalem for Passover in mid-Nisan (*c.* 1 April 66). Josephus dates the queen's appeal to 16 Artemisius, apparently = 16 Iyyar (the month after Passover). Given that Cestius would have needed a good couple of weeks to return to Antioch, a mounted courier bringing Berenice's letter may have reached him only a week or two after his return.

Against the advice of his military commanders in Antioch, who expect him to send an army to crush the Judaeans, Cestius has reason to suspect Florus' claim. He instead dispatches a trusted tribune, instructing him to meet up with Agrippa II and determine how things have developed since his Passover visit (2.333–34). The tribune's report confirms that Judaeans are happy with Rome and all other officials; they simply cannot tolerate Florus' ruthlessness (2.336, 339–41). Agrippa II's famous speech, given immediately after the tribune's departure, is occasioned by the people's demand that he let them send a delegation to Nero – to preclude any appearance of revolt and accuse Florus (2.342).

Cestius will finally march towards Jerusalem with a legion, reluctantly and with Agrippa alongside, after the king is expelled from Jerusalem for proving himself useless in dealing with Florus (2.499). Agrippa and Cestius are now the sole remaining pickets of the formerly secure fence around Roman–-Judaean relations. As the young emperor urges on his incendiary equestrian agent in aggravating the Judaeans by raiding their resources, these two figures can do little to change the direction of things.

We now see the decisive contribution of the auxiliary to the Jerusalem massacre. Even as he stresses Florus' responsibility, Josephus lifts the veil on a military seething with rage against Judaeans, and ready not merely to follow Florus' harsh orders but to exceed them. The auxiliary thus becomes a major aggravating factor in the story.

This new phase begins shortly after Cestius' Passover visit, when Florus dispatches soldiers to raid the temple for funds. This prompts rallies in the sacred precinct by outraged Judaeans, under the gaze of the auxiliary on the porticoes above. In one raucous meeting, angry Judaean youths mockingly pass around a hat for the money-hungry governor (2.294–95). When Florus in Caesarea hears of it, 'he rushed against Jerusalem with an army of both cavalry and infantry', perhaps two cohorts to supplement the one already there, expecting to cover his alleged cupidity with Rome's authority (2.296). Later he will summon another two cohorts (2.318), meaning that he is willing to use nearly all of his six-cohort auxiliary to intimidate Jerusalem.

Setting up his tribunal in the Herodian palace, which dominates the city's south-west (today's Armenian) quarter, thin-skinned Florus demands that Jerusalem's elders hand over those who mocked him. When they try to deflect his anger with moral reasoning and excuses for youth, he commands his huge force to start plundering the adjacent Upper Market, in the rich part of town. Josephus observes:

> In their lust for gain, they took advantage of such an authorisation and not only plundered the area against which they had been sent but, bursting into the nearby residences, began slaughtering the occupants ... They arrested many of the respectable folk and brought them up to Florus. After torturing them with lashes, he crucified them.[58]

The shocking death toll, allegedly 630, includes women, infants, and even Judaean men who have attained Roman equestrian rank – the same as Florus (2.308). The soldiers' fury is hard to explain by greed alone, just as their behaviour towards Queen Berenice suggests deeper motives. She sends soldiers from her tiny bodyguard to Florus to appeal for mercy (2.310) – and risks her life in doing so:

> [T]he soldiers' charge was rabid even against the queen ... They would have done away with her too, had she not managed to take refuge in the royal palace [where Florus was]. There she passed the night, albeit with a guard unit because she was alarmed by the soldiers' aggression.[59]

The episode ends with Berenice before Florus' tribunal, surrounded by these lethally hostile auxiliary men, a humiliated and barefoot suppliant (2.314).

Even as the wise leaders of Jerusalem try to persuade the people that violent reaction will only make things worse, Florus ups the ante still further by demanding that they prove their submission. Having summoned the two additional cohorts from Caesarea, he will believe their protestations of goodwill if they welcome that force in the customary way, out on the road, in spite of all that has happened. He has, however, sent orders to the cohorts to ignore any salute from the people, telling them to act harshly against anyone who utters a syllable in complaint (2.318–19). The ploy produces its intended result: 'Soldiers fell upon those they caught up with, beating them without restraint'.[60]

Meanwhile Florus takes soldiers from the Herodian palace through the crowded streets north-east to the Antonia fortress. Fearing that he has assembled such a large force for a decisive raid on the holy precinct from the Antonia, the citizens destroy a section of the colonnade connecting that fortress with the temple (2.328–30). Their bold determination persuades Florus that he cannot succeed for the moment. In a conciliatory gesture he promises to depart from Jerusalem with his cohorts, leaving whatever size of garrison they choose. In response Jerusalem's leaders:

[58] Josephus, *War* 2.305–06. [59] Ibid., 2.312. [60] Ibid., 2.328.

> promised everything . . . if he would leave just one cohort for them, and *not the one that had fought*, for the common folk harboured animosity towards this one because of what they had suffered. So he exchanged the cohort, according to their preference and, with the balance of the force, returned to Caesarea.[61]

This is puzzling because Josephus does not attribute the ravages of the Upper City to one cohort; those that arrive with Florus have a hand in the death and destruction.

Florus' withdrawal is in any case merely tactical. Once back in Caesarea, he writes immediately to Cestius requesting legionary intervention to crush the city (2.333). When Cestius instead sends the tribune and Agrippa II,[62] they are greeted by the widows of Florus' victims and given a tour of the ransacked market and plundered houses (2.339). They understand that there is no desire in Jerusalem for rebellion against *Rome*. Whichever cohort remained as a garrison, the striking thing is that no further malfeasance on its part appears before Jerusalem's militants besiege and massacre it (2.434–50). It seems to be the very garrison that the leaders have chosen as least implicated in the recent bloodshed that the armed factions nevertheless kill.

The siege and massacre come about in the following way. Agrippa II has been forced out of Jerusalem. The population begins to arm itself, and younger priests close the temple to foreign connections. At the request of the city leaders and presumably in consultation with Cestius, from somewhere in the north Agrippa immediately dispatches two thousand of his Judaean cavalry, partly to help shield the auxiliary garrison (2.409–21). His elite troops manage to secure the Upper City for a while, but soon are forced to yield to the armed faction of Eleazar, son of the high priest Ananias, and retreat to the security of the Herodian palace. They cannot save the auxiliary garrison unit stationed in the Antonia. After a brief siege, those men are attacked and killed by Eleazar's faction (2.430). The rest of the auxiliary garrison has taken refuge with Agrippa's force in Herod's palace.

Tensions are heightened further when a second Judaean faction emerges, led by one Menachem and armed with professional-grade (if old) weapons liberated from Masada (2.433). These men seize control of the struggle and begin a methodical siege of the Herodian palace, which now hosts Agrippa's royal troops, members of the Jerusalem elite and the remainder of the auxiliary garrison. Menachem catches and kills the former

[61] Ibid., 2.332 (emphasis added). [62] See p. 126 above.

high priest Ananias, Eleazar's father, along with his associates fleeing the palace. Menachem then permits the troops sent by Agrippa, apparently because they are Judaean, to depart from the palace compound with their lives. This leaves only the remaining auxiliary garrison, trapped and terrified – but then Menachem is captured and killed by Eleazar's men (2.337–48).

Now Eleazar resumes the siege of the Herodian palace. As we saw in the quoted narrative, he finally yields to the cohort's plea for a truce that would let them leave unarmed (2.437). Since Agrippa's cavalry had just been released under a truce, this pledge must have seemed trustworthy. But only Metilius, apparently a Roman commander of the locally raised unit, survives the cold-blooded massacre of the Samarian-Caesarean soldiers, and that when he desperately promises to Judaise (2.450–56).

Although Josephus' *War* thus gives a fairly clear causal chain for this massacre, puzzles remain, especially the mismatch between the unit that is killed and the one held responsible for earlier carnage. The reader must assume that much more happened in real life. It is again a paradox that *Antiquities*, which gives a much more vivid picture of the ethnic dimensions of this conflict, finds no use for the massacre of the garrison as a climax, whereas *War*, which somewhat obscures the motivating factors, includes the massacre as a crucial cause of the war.

Conclusions: Life vs. Narrative, Judaeans vs. Romans, Religious vs. Other Violence

Having attempted a critical interpretation of *War*'s double-massacre episode, we may return to our three questions.

Real events and narratives. Our lives do not unfold as narratives with plots, themes and characters. We construct these in retrospect – as an astonished Napoleon declared at the end, 'What a novel my life has been!'[63] We have seen, first, that *Antiquities* makes a whole new story from events narrated in *War*, often contradicting the earlier account. It also frequently supplies information that would have been useful for the reader of *War* to know. Second, whether in *War* or *Antiquities*, each episode creates more problems than it solves. What were the concrete rights of Judaeans in Caesarea before Nero's decision? What would a Judaean Caesarea have looked like, and how would non-Judaeans have fared in

[63] P. Gueniffey, *Bonaparte: 1769–1802* (Paris, 2013) 11, trans. in English under the same title (Cambridge, MA, 2015) 1.

it? What motivated the initiative in the late 50s? What was Florus' mandate from Nero? Which cohort did Jerusalem's leaders exclude? We can only wonder. Third, Josephus' accounts are obviously crafted, structured and thematic narratives.

Even if the distinction between life and narrative is now obvious, as I hope, some consequences for research might not be. A recent monograph on Judaean minorities in the East illustrates the point. The author writes:

> Josephus tells us that it was 'at the same day and hour' [as the Jerusalem massacre] that the Caesareans turned on their neighboring Judeans. Josephus seems to be *curiously unwilling to draw a causal connection* between the murder of the soldiers and the Judeans in Caesarea. But neither was Josephus an eyewitness in Caesarea. *News must have* travelled to *Caesarea* first. And a messenger traveling by horseback could have made the nearly 90 kilometer trip from Jerusalem to Caesarea within a short day's travel and reported the news there that same day of the Sabbath, and this is *certainly what must* have happened.[64]

When watching a play or film, we expect the story to remain safely enclosed by its walls. When an actor leaves her dramatic world – ancient Rome, Victorian England or the Wild West – to address the audience directly, in terms of our twenty-first-century values and language, we say that they 'break the fourth wall'. Although no character in Josephus' *War* breaks out of the story in this way, scholars do so on their behalf, and this is an example.

Josephus' *War* fuses the two massacre scenes as part of its dramatic milieu of tragic pollution and purification. Inside that constructed world, the massacres can occur at precisely the same moment, not only the same day, because of the 'other-worldly provision' to which Josephus appeals. He himself has given the travel distance between Jerusalem and Caesarea as 600 *stadia*, or 120 kilometres (1.79), which obviates the possibility of travel between the two places, or any natural causal relationship.

Not living in his story world, we naturally suspect a tit-for-tat relationship between the two events. But – although Josephus often describes cycles of retaliations – that is not his claim, and he deliberately precludes it. Correlation at a distance is a feature of eerie stories. Cures that occur far away from the healer are part of Jesus' repertoire[65] – the distance heightening the sense of awe. Efforts to save Josephus' account by offering a

[64] B. Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire: Rights, Citizenship and Civil Discord* (Leiden, 2015) 256 (emphasis added).
[65] Luke 7:1–10; John 4:46–54.

rational causal explanation (with 'must' and 'certainly'), which he 'curiously' does not recognise, amount to breaking the fourth wall on his behalf: trying to bridge his world to ours. But it is arbitrary to select only convenient elements from the story ('the same day') as factual data, while ignoring the other conditions that constitute *his* story ('the same hour', 'other-worldly' causes). We may well imagine that a massacre of auxiliary soldiers in Jerusalem led to retaliation against Judaeans in Caesarea or vice versa. But Josephus' *War*, our only basis for supposing that any massacres occurred at all, does not help to make this likely.

Our analysis, indeed, raises the unsettling question of whether either of *War*'s massacres actually occurred. The honest answer is that we cannot be sure. We can only reason from imagined stakes and interests. *Could* Josephus have narrated these things in *War* if they did not happen? He does allow that many Judaeans were expelled from Caesarea (not killed). What were the proportions of the killed and expelled? Perhaps there were not comprehensive massacres, but murders of some Judaeans. That could explain why *Antiquities* could overlook them. Something happened in each place, but we cannot be clear about what it was.

Anti-Roman sentiment? Before some recent challenges, it has been all but universally assumed that the war with Rome must have been caused by the sort of Rome-hatred satirised in Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979)[66] – a Jerusalem seething with'Romans go home!' animus. Not only do our two stories fail to indicate any such anti-Roman feeling, however; they preclude it, for example with Josephus' claim that Jerusalem achieved the highest degree of felicity under Roman rule. He could not have concealed pervasive anti-Roman feeling, for that would have rendered his narrative nonsensical: the relentless (usually successful) appeals and embassies to the emperor or his legate, Jerusalem's primacy among regional *poleis*, and the concern of legates for Jerusalem.

The role of religion. Finally, to the central theme of this volume: To what extent were the massacres in Caesarea and Jerusalem, as *War* relates them, examples of a distinctively *religious* violence? They may have been religious in some trans-temporal sense defined by modern investigators. But Josephus had no category comparable to our religion for communicating with his audiences about the motivations of the ancient actors, though all sides understood their gods and sacred spaces to be part and parcel of *polis* life. Therefore he could not, and he did not, employ a concept of religion to

[66] See now J. E. Taylor (ed.), *Jesus and Brian: Exploring the Historical Jesus and His Times via Monty Python's Life of Brian* (London, 2015).

explain these pivotal events.[67] For his Roman audiences, Josephus explains the reactions of all parties in the standard language and categories of his time, in which cult and temple were certainly part and parcel of *ethnos* and *polis* identity, but 'religion' was not an identifiable category or cause. The dominant motives are political power, insult, aggression, outrage, fear and self-defence – which reoccur through the human past. Most importantly, these were local actions and responses to particular social-political conditions in Jerusalem and Caesarea, and did not involve the vast majority of Judaeans in Galilee, Peraea, elsewhere in Syria or the Eastern Mediterranean, or even the nearby Idumaeans, who observed Judaean law and cult. I remain open to suggestions, but so far do not see how including 'religion' at some point (where?) would help our historical understanding of these episodes: of what happened then.

[67] Cf., for a different view, Bendlin, this volume, pp. 141–42.

CHAPTER 6

*Religion, Violence and the Diasporic Experience: The Jewish Diaspora in Flavian Rome and Puteoli**

Andreas Bendlin

Introduction: Violence and Religion before Later Antiquity

It is often stated that religious violence in Roman Antiquity did not predate the third century, barring such exceptional cases as the three Jewish rebellions against Rome (66–70, 115–17 and 132–35). By comparison with the cataclysmic, if intermittent, physical violence since 249–51 (the rule of Decius), which is often believed to have arisen in part from religious motivations, earlier incidents of violence against dissident religious groups seem to pale into insignificance. A causal link has therefore been established between the rise of religious violence and the emergence in later Antiquity of increasingly discordant and monothetic religious world views, Christian monotheism being one salient representative.[1]

One problem with this view is the persistent, if tacit, assumption that the perpetration of violence, in those limited cases before Late Antiquity when the political sphere forcefully interfered with matters of religious difference, was but an exception. When violence occurred, it was motivated by other than overtly religious considerations. At stake is by implication the view that different deities and their cults cohabitated in predominantly consensual fashion in the pre-Late Antique world,[2] despite

* I am grateful to Mareile Haase for her comments and advice on several versions of this chapter, and to Jitse Dijkstra for his patience and feedback on an earlier draft.

[1] E.g. J. Hahn, 'Die Herausforderung der antiken Stadt in der Spätantike: Christentum, urbane Sakraltopographie und religiöse Gewalt', in J. Oberste (ed.), *Pluralität, Konkurrenz, Konflikt: Religiöse Spannungen im städtischen Raum der Vormoderne* (Regensburg, 2013) 11–30 at 19; J. Rüpke, *Pantheon: A New History of Roman Religion* (Princeton, 2018) 319–85 at 385.

[2] J. Scheid, 'Fremde Kulte in Rom: Nachbarn oder Feinde?', in U. Riemer and P. Riemer (eds.), *Xenophobie – Philoxenie: Vom Umgang mit Fremden in der Antike* (Stuttgart, 2005) 225–40; W. Van Andringa and F. Van Haeperen, 'Le Romain et l'étranger: formes d'intégration des cultes étrangers dans les cités de l'Empire romain', in C. Bonnet et al. (eds.), *Les religions orientales dans le monde grec et romain: cent ans après Cumont* (Brussels, 2009) 23–42; N. Belayche and J.-D. Dubois (eds.), *L'oiseau et le poisson: cohabitations religieuses dans les mondes grec et romain* (Paris, 2011); F. G.

the misgivings many people had about the alterity of the foreign gods they encountered abroad or at home. Ostensibly, such integrated cohabitation precluded sustained religious conflict and violence. A corollary problem is posed by the hypothesis that religion, as a distinct domain of social taxonomy, emerged only in later Antiquity. Without such a domain in place, it seems anachronistic to talk about religious violence.

It is argued in this chapter that none of these assumptions is particularly plausible. They have hindered appreciation of the extent to which social actors before later Antiquity could relate the perpetration of violence to the religious domain. In point of fact, the lively scholarly interest in violent conflict between, and within, religions in Late Antiquity derives from the same intellectual tradition that is reluctant to consider that religious considerations motivated violence in earlier periods.

The notion of religious violence itself is routinely subject to terminological and phenomenological confusion. It must be stated at the outset that violence is never intrinsically religious, as little as it is innately ethnic, economic or political. Rather, the relation between violence and religion is contingent. We must disaggregate the two lest we continue to misapprehend the nature of their relation.[3] One critical response to their conflation has been to claim that violence perpetrated in the name of a religion is extrinsic to its true, essentially peaceful nature. Another is to reject the category of religion as a classificatory product of Western modernity, which lacks any transcultural essence; its susceptibility to violence is a myth, propagated to foster dichotomisation between Western liberal secularism and the religious alterity of other societies.[4] While both positions make valiant efforts to disaggregate violence and religion, neither seems willing to entertain the thought that the debate is not about a matter of ontology – as if a religion possessed a true essence, which some of its followers merely fail to recognise, or alternatively, as if religion had no

Naerebout, 'Convergence and Divergence: One Empire, Many Cultures', in S. Benoist and G. de Kleijn (eds.), *Integration in Rome and in the Roman World* (Leiden, 2014) 263–81 at 278–81; C. Bonnet and E. Sanzi, 'Introduzione: "Il laboratorio comune della terra"', in C. Bonnet and E. Sanzi (eds.), *Roma, la città degli dei: la capitale dell'Impero come laboratorio religioso* (Rome, 2018) 15–26 at 18–25.

[3] Further on this issue, see H. G. Kippenberg, *Violence as Worship: Religious Wars in the Age of Globalization* (Stanford, 2011) 6–18, B. Lincoln, 'Violence', in B. S. Spaeth (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (Cambridge, 2013) 199–219 at 203–12, and Chapter 1 by Kippenberg, this volume. Cf. R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA, 2004) 88–115 at 114–15, who enjoins us to disaggregate 'ethnic violence'.

[4] W. T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford, 2009).

transhistorical essence whatsoever. At stake is rather what I take to be an act of semantic appropriation: social actors engage one very particular domain of social practice (which we describe with the second-order category religion) in an attempt to justify their violent actions or sufferings, in the course of which they ambiguate other causes or motivations.

In what measure, then, did those who instigated or suffered, condoned or condemned violence before Late Antiquity seek to invest their experiences with religious meaning? As is argued in this chapter, the historical actors in Flavian Rome and Puteoli, those who perpetrated and sustained violence, could turn to the symbols, practices and beliefs representative of their respective religious views as they were trying to make sense of their experiences. Religion constituted a salient domain of social practice, empowering their motivations, actions and suffering.

Any analysis of the relation between violence and religion in Flavian Italy would be strongly impoverished, however, if it were to focus solely on physical violence. For some might rightly object that there is meagre evidence for any physical violence suffered by Jews in the diaspora after the conflict in Judaea (66–70) and before the Jewish diaspora revolt (115–17). In anticipation of that objection, this chapter argues that we fundamentally misapprehend the nature of violence in society unless we recognise the need to distinguish the various forms in which violence occurs. Violence may be physical, structural or cultural; in historical actuality, these three forms may have affected Jewish diaspora life in unequal measure, but their different manifestations could readily be experienced. Lest one believe this experience to have been a peculiarity of the Jewish diaspora, this chapter juxtaposes the experiences of other diasporic groups in Puteoli in order to argue that their exposure to violence did not differ radically from that of their Jewish neighbours. Religious prejudice played a role in the perpetration of violence against these diasporic communities too. These diasporas may not have lived in a 'persecuting society' analogous to what can be encountered in later historical periods, but we fail to understand fully the physical, structural and cultural violence perpetrated against the Jewish diaspora if we do not relate it to the violence that members of other diasporic communities suffered.[5]

[5] R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, 2007) discusses a similar historical question, albeit in relation to a very different data set. I thank John Magee for this reference.

Enlightened Polytheists and Monotheistic Zealots, or: Why Religion and Violence Must Be Disaggregated

There exists an often-discussed intellectual tradition that typologises religions according to their respective affinity for conflict, violence, persecution or, alternatively, tolerance. I reference only the positing by David Hume (1711–76) of a correlation between the belief in one God, most powerful and cruel, and the disproportionate amount of violence committed by monotheistic religions, and the belief of Baron d'Holbach (1723–89) that those who lived in a polytheistic world were 'moins zélés & plus toléran[t]s'. If there arose war among such people, d'Holbach asserted, it was 'politique & jamais religieuse'.[6] The persistent line of influence that can be drawn from these eighteenth-century narratives to today's insipid blaming of monotheism for religious conflict and violence is less commonly acknowledged. Ancient polities, it is held, did not violently assert the superiority of their god(s), while neither ancient city states nor empires fought wars on behalf of their religion or legitimised state violence in religious terms, at least not before Late Antiquity. If there occurred violence, it was 'political [rather than] theologically sanctioned'.[7]

This modern view does not differ fundamentally from the thesis of Edward Gibbon (1737–94), expounded in the first volume of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, that the Roman violent treatment of early Christians from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius was but a political response to civil disobedience. Policing by Rome's magistrates was informed 'not by the furious zeal of bigots, but by the temperate policy of legislators'. This vision of a polytheistic world in which violence remained under the control of civil society but did not yet carry any overt religious connotations, directly responded to eighteenth-century (and later) concerns and desires, but it deeply romanticised the first and second centuries CE, the period in which Gibbon and his intellectual heirs locate an enlightened pluralism of religious variety, difference and tolerance.[8]

[6] D. Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (London, 1757), ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford, 1993) 138, 162; P. H. D. d'Holbach, *Contagion sacrée, ou Histoire naturelle de la superstition*, vol. 1 (London, 1768) 53–54. Cf. F. Schmidt, 'Polytheisms: Degeneration or Progress?', *History and Anthropology* 3 (1987) 9–60 at 21–26.

[7] J. Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich, 2003) 31–33, trans. in English as *The Price of Monotheism* (Stanford, 2010) 18–19 (quote at p. 18). See also the General Introduction, p. 4, Kippenberg, pp. 17–18, and Bremmer, pp. 49–50, all this volume.

[8] E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1 (London, 1776), ed. D. Womersley, vol. 1 (London, 1994) 524. For the 'enlightened' (the word is Gibbon's) harmony

The most obvious shortcoming of this view is the confusion of polytheism with tolerance, which those perpetuate who portray the early and high Roman empire as a 'golden age of religious pluralism'.[9] This fallacy has been refuted on more than one occasion.[10] Just as pertinent is the realisation that polytheism and monotheism, ever since their early modern invention as tools of religious taxonomy, have been far from innocent categories. Neither was introduced only to classify religions by reference to the number of deities one worshipped. Their invention has always allowed for a hermeneutical sleight of hand through which one could hypothesise an inherent potential for religious violence in the one religion which, because it accepts only one God, must violently reject another, more benevolent religion's many deities.[11]

However, it is not enough to challenge the evidential underpinnings of this intellectual tradition, for instance by highlighting the violence perpetrated by polytheistic religions, as some have done.[12] While ostensibly subverting the earlier position, this response in truth merely inverts, but still embraces, the phenomenological classification behind the idea that there existed in the ancient world polytheistic and monotheistic religions, each conceptualised in essentialising terms. We must reject the temptation to define the religious domain solely by way of crude theological essentialism, as if social agency was determined by a religious genotype, as it were. Across diverse religious traditions, social actors appropriate the religious domain to make sense of violence; a satisfactory response to that

of the period in matters of religion, see ibid., vol. 1, 56, 514, a sentiment still echoed by R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London, 1986) 260–61.

[9] J. Scheid, 'Religions in Contact', in S. I. Johnston (ed.), *Ancient Religions: Beliefs and Rituals across the Mediterranean World* (Cambridge, MA, 2007) 112–26 at 114, 121–25; J. Scheid, *The Gods, the State, and the Individual: Reflections on Civic Religion in Rome* (Philadelphia, 2016) 108.

[10] P. Garnsey, 'Religious Toleration in Classical Antiquity', in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Oxford, 1984) 1–27 at 24–25; J. Losehand, '"The Religious Harmony in the Ancient World": Vom Mythos religiöser Toleranz in der Antike', *GFA* 12 (2009) 99–132; S. J. Larson, 'The Trouble with Religious Tolerance in Roman Antiquity', in J. D. Rosenblum, L. C. Vuong and N. P. DesRosiers (eds.), *Religious Competition in the Third Century CE: Jews, Christians, and the Greco-Roman World* (Göttingen, 2014) 50–59. See also below, n. 66.

[11] See also the General Introduction, pp. 6–7, and Raschle, p. 88, both this volume.

[12] G. G. Stroumsa, 'Postscript: The Future of Intolerance', in G. N. Stanton and G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge, 1998) 356–61 at 356; J. N. Bremmer, 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', in A. C. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) 8–30 at 29. For a critique of this approach, see also W. Mayer, 'Re-Theorising Religious Conflict: Early Christianity to Late Antiquity and beyond', in C. L. de Wet and W. Mayer (eds.), *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* (London, 2018) 3–29 at 7.

reality requires that one disaggregate violence and religion, rather than ambiguate their relation.

In critical response to the ideal of polytheistic tolerance and pluralism, several incidents of Roman violent intervention aimed at regulating matters of religious significance may be chronicled. All of them pre-date the mid-third century: the Roman prohibition and removal, by decree of the Senate, of Bacchic cult places across early second-century BCE Italy; the destruction, at the hands of late Republican Roman magistrates, of altars dedicated to the goddess Isis; the expulsion on several occasions of astrologers and members of Jewish communities from the city of Rome; or the forceful suppression of groups that the imperial state considered deviant, like the druids and early Christians.[13] The modern engagement with these incidents, however, frequently serves merely to roughen the edges of the irenic portrait of Roman religion one encounters all too often, through admission of some level of violence back into its fold. The ideological foundations which serve as the portrait's canvas are rarely subverted. Indeed, it can be argued that the above incidents receive consideration in scholarship precisely because they *seem* so exceptional.[14] As long as their exceptionality is taken for granted, one is free to scrutinise them for a demonstration of the limits of religious toleration and the existence of polytheism's darker sides. Their alleged exceptionality still allows for the traditional image of ancient polytheism to persist – a religious system which in most respects was rather benign, despite its dark corners.

In this narrative the rise of monotheistic sectarianism and subsequent conflict between religions proffers a perfect antithesis. Gibbon's belief that the mid-third century, the moment of the first empire-wide persecutions of Christian monotheism, was a watershed in Roman religious history can thus be taken as an all too convenient benchmark for the coming of age of religious violence in the Roman world. Hence, it is perhaps unsurprising that several scholars have followed the eighteenth century's lead (whether knowingly or oblivious to its intellectual patrimony I cannot tell) in selecting Decius' reign as the historical moment when the state, enforcing that all partake in sacrifice, first used violence to assert the authority of its own religious system in the face of religious dissidence.[15]

[13] Cf. Chapter 4 by Raschle, this volume, specifically on the suppression of the Isis cult and astrologers at Rome.

[14] C. Ando, 'The Ontology of Religious Institutions', *History of Religions* 50 (2010) 54–79 at 55–56.

[15] E.g. P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2010) 43–70.

One of several crucial junctures at which Gibbon located 'decline and fall' occurs when Roman administrators, beginning with Decius' persecutions, abandon their civil policy of religious indifference, only to produce 'in their minds some sentiments of faith and reverence for a system which they had been accustomed to consider with the most careless levity'. When attacked by monotheistic sectarian enthusiasts, who reject Enlightenment ideals of civil sociability, third-century Rome, abandoning its tolerant reserve, marshals a religious zeal quite comparable to that of the Christian opponent.[16] Underlying this momentous historical caesura is the fundamental issue of what is meant by religion, and it is from that question that the historian's efforts to disaggregate religion and violence must begin. The *History of the Decline and Fall* routinely acknowledges pagan 'reverence', guided by 'custom and education', for its religious tradition – an attitude, we are warned more recently, 'we should not mistake . . . for "religion" in the strong Christian sense'.[17] The advent of Christian zeal, however, Gibbon opined, awakened pagan polytheism from its 'supine indifference' to develop 'sentiments of faith', which heralded the arrival of a very different kind of reverence, now born out of 'terror and emulation', for a 'system' – a process that 'establish[ed] the reign of superstition'.[18] Gibbon emerges as a writer who historicises the coming of age of religious violence by historicising the coming into being of religion. Although not the first to do so, Gibbon isolates the moment in time when religion surfaced – as both an autonomous concept and an identifier of group affiliation – and thus furnishes a historical explanation for the potentiality of religious violence to occur.

When more recent histories stress the emergence of religion – both as an autonomous taxonomical concept and in the form of (nuclear) religions –

[16] Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall* I, 560, discussed by D. Womersley, *The Transformation of 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'* (Cambridge, 1988) 99–132; J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 2003) 430–40, and vol. 5 (Cambridge, 2010) 244–310. On eighteenth-century debates about Christian sectarian 'enthusiasm' as the antithesis of harmonious sociability, see L. E. Klein, 'Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60 (1997) 153–77.

[17] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 260–61.

[18] Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall* I, 56–60, 559–61, 864–908. 'Enthusiasm' and 'superstition' draw on contemporary semantic distinctions between the enthusiasm of radical Protestantism and the superstition attributed to the Catholic Church, with Anglican orthodoxy claiming a middle ground between these two extremes; cf. P. Ghosh, 'Gibbon's Timeless Verity: Nature and Neo-Classicism in the Late Enlightenment', in D. Womersley (ed.), *Edward Gibbon: Bicentenary Essays* (Oxford, 1997) 121–63 at 150–62; S. Miller, *Three Deaths and Enlightenment Thought: Hume, Johnson, Marat* (Lewisburg, 2001) 75–84; cf. above, n. 16.

during the later second and third centuries,[19] they betray an inadvertent indebtedness to this intellectual trajectory. These histories may have become untied to a large extent from the Gibbonesque idea that the conflictual encounter with Christianity compelled paganism to discover religion. Instead, they propose that the rise of nascent religions (in the plural) was contingent upon the coming into existence of a number of shared family resemblances: there now developed distinct group identities, exclusive membership, autonomous hierarchies and sufficiently distinctive belief systems among a variety of social actors across the Roman Mediterranean.[20] And yet, these same histories belie the continued influence of a deeply teleological narrative: the endeavour to explain how religion(s) emerged as an autonomous domain of social practice operates within the artificial confines of a well-worn periodisation, according to which the Roman imperial age eventually morphed into a Late Antique world that differed profoundly with regard to the ontological status of the second-order concept of religion. It does not matter for the argument whether we date this alleged Late Antique transformation to the third century or instead prefer the imaginary watershed to have coincided with the Christianisation of the Roman world since the fourth, as some do. What matters is that the scholarly reluctance to endeavour a religious conceptualisation of violence before the mid-third century is predicated upon the refusal to conceptualise for this earlier period religion as an autonomous domain of social activity. By a simple sleight of hand one declares the absence of religious violence where religion does not exist.

It has become almost a truism to acknowledge that Graeco-Roman society – not unlike other pre-modern and non-Western cultures, incidentally – lacked a distinctive word for religion. And yet, from the fact that no emic linguistic or classificatory concept of 'religion' existed it does not logically follow that there was a historical period 'before religion', as some

[19] G. G. Stroumsa, *The End of Sacrifice: Religious Transformations in Late Antiquity* (Chicago, 2009) 84–109 at 107; J. Rüpke, *Von Jupiter zu Christus: Religionsgeschichte in römischer Zeit* (Darmstadt, 2011) 157–175 at 171–75.

[20] Cf. G. D. Woolf, 'Empires, Diasporas and the Emergence of Religions', in J. Lieu and J. Carleton Paget (eds.), *Christianity in the Second Century: Themes and Developments* (Cambridge, 2017) 25–38 at 30–38. Similar claims are made by J. A. North, 'The Development of Religious Pluralism', in J. Lieu et al. (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London, 1992) 174–93 at 178, and 'Pagan Ritual and Monotheism', in S. Mitchell and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2010) 34–52 at 47–52; C. Ando, *Imperial Rome, AD 193 to 284: The Critical Century* (Edinburgh, 2012) 122–45; R. L. Gordon, 'Monotheism, Henotheism, Megatheism: Debating Pre-Constantinian Religious Change', *JRA* 27 (2014) 665–76 at 671–73.

have claimed.[21] Religion may not be a native construct but rather a category created by scholars, as J. Z. Smith observes, but 'that does not mean that they have created something ex nihilo; there was already something in the world which justified using such a taxonomic creation'.[22]

Gauging that which 'was already in the world' before the third century, I proceed selectively. Since the remainder of this chapter discusses the contingent relation of violence and religion by focusing on the Jewish (and other) diaspora communities in Flavian Rome and Puteoli, I select Flavius Josephus' discussion of the factors that caused hatred of Jewish diasporas. While the text in question, a passage from *Against Apion*, ostensibly contrasts Egyptian animal worship and Jewish religious attitudes, Josephus' criteria for juxtaposing these two opposites are predicated upon a shared social taxonomy of religious practice and belief:

> The opposition of these people [the Egyptians] caused them [the Jews] much enmity as our piety differs from the one they acknowledge to the same degree that the nature of God stands at a distance from unreasoning animals. For to acknowledge these [animals] as gods is a tradition common to them, but individually they differ from each other in the honours they accord them. Quite empty-headed and mindless people, from the beginning they were accustomed to forming base opinions about the gods and therefore showed themselves incapable of imitating the dignity of our theology. But seeing that we were emulated by many, they developed ill-will against us.

Josephus acknowledges that human 'piety' (εὐσέβεια) addresses the divine realm, which holds true regardless of whether we recognise one god or many theriomorphic divinities. Εὐσέβεια consists of a pragmatic and a discursive dimension. On the one hand, it manifests itself in the practice of worship (τιμαὶ θεῶν), which may follow relatively homogeneous ritual expectations, as is the case in Second Temple Judaism, or is differentiated by place and individual predilection, as in the majority of polytheistic contexts. On the other hand, εὐσέβεια is expressed in the way people

[21] B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, 2013); C. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York, 2016). Cf., on this debate, the General Introduction, p. 3, Mason, pp. 110–11, Rives, p. 177, and Mayer, pp. 257–58, all this volume.

[22] J. S. Jensen, 'On How Making Differences Makes a Difference', in W. Braun and R. T. McCutcheon (eds.), *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (London, 2008) 140–62 at 144, which agrees well with the insight of J. Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago, 2004) 179–96 at 193–94, and *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, 1982) xi, that the second-order category religion remains fundamental in 'establishing a disciplinary horizon', without which 'there can be no disciplined study of religion'.

conceptualise the very nature of their god(s), be it through Egyptian δόξαι or Jewish θεολογία.[23]

Josephus sketches a distinct domain of social practice, which uses peculiar (ritual) behaviour and employs a particular (theological) discourse in order to establish the physical reality of ontologically different – and hence, counterintuitive – divine agents. This domain is characterised by the attribution of specific agency to these gods. The domain's distinctiveness, however, is further predicated upon the existence of specific, widely differentiated practices and discourses, and of organisations and institutions to support them. We may legitimately describe this domain with our second-order category religion. Some scholars endeavour to identify a single semantic category that might represent religion, whereas others deduce from the lack of such a category that a discrete domain of religion 'in the modern sense' did not exist.[24] However, it should be apparent that even without one such category, people in the Graeco-Roman world were perfectly capable of conceptualising as discrete and functionally differentiated a domain that we describe as religion.

Josephus dichotomises the religious differences between Egyptians and Jews in order to explain enmity and ill-will – the very μίσος πρὸς Ἰουδαίους he deplores elsewhere.[25] Conflict can be blamed on religious difference, but Josephus is too insightful a chronicler to ignore that a number of contingent motivations may be held responsible for the outbreak of open violence. People's hatred of the Jews, he suggests elsewhere, 'was at its height' during the military and political crisis of 66–70. Local pogroms in the cities of Syria, however, were as much conditioned by religious prejudice as they were caused by ethnic hostilities or local suspicion of the Jewish population's disloyalty during the rebellion.[26]

[23] Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.224–25. Translations in this chapter are my own. For the theme of hatred of the Jews, cf. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 120; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.65–67; *CPJ* I 141. On Josephus' peculiar use of θεολογία, which he uses in *Against Apion* 1.78, 237 to refer to Egyptian mythology, see F. Siegert, *Flavius Josephus, Über die Ursprünglichkeit des Judentums (Contra Apionem)*, vol. 2 (Göttingen, 2008) 92. The polemical context of the passage is discussed by J. M. G. Barclay, 'The Politics of Contempt: Judaeans and Egyptians in Josephus' *Against Apion*', in J. M. G. Barclay (ed.), *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (London, 2004) 109–27.

[24] See Mason, this volume, pp. 131–32.

[25] Josephus, *Judaean War* 1.2, paraphrased as 'Judenhass' and 'Judenhetze' by T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. 5 (Berlin, 1885) 519; Z. Yavetz, 'Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity: A Different Approach', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 44 (1993) 1–22 at 18–19.

[26] Josephus, *Judaean War* 7.47. Hatred of Jewish populations in the cities of Syria: *Judaean War* 2.461, 468. Fear of Jewish insurrection: 2.461, 463, 467–68, 7.47–62. Plunder of Jewish property: 2.464, 468.

Hence, Josephus fails to support the modern conflation of religion and violence. In fact, he rather encourages us to read his narrative of the revolt in Judaea and his account of the Jewish diaspora experience as historical illustrations of the contingent relation of violence and religion in the second half of the first century.

Different Manifestations of Violence

Hostility and violence have always coexisted with accommodation and cohabitation.[27] This historical perspective alone should belie any attempt to demarcate a brave old world of consensual religious cohabitation from the world of Late Antiquity, in which religious violence emerged. Much the same may be inferred from Josephus. *Against Apion*, published in the 90s or the following decade, although chronicling Egyptian enmity, also engages the hostility to diaspora Judaism in Rome and Italy during the time of the text's composition.[28] If we were to choose as our criterion for the existence of sustained levels of violence in Roman imperial society manifestations of direct violence alone, a fair apprehension of the scale of everyday hostility to diaspora Judaism would become impossible. The latter is a permanent aspect of the diasporic experience, whereas it may take a concrete, yet historically contingent conflict for open violence to erupt. At stake, therefore, is the question of the degree to which hostility in periods of ostensible cohabitation, the historical periods in between outbreaks of violent conflict, can serve as an indicator of violence.

Physical violence is an exemplary form of violence. Possibly because it is most readily accessible to the ancient historian, scholarship focuses on physical violence in Antiquity, from clashes between hostile groups, violence against civilian populations during war or state coercion to crime, murder and everyday violence in the household, family and neighbourhood.[29] These studies are united by a common denominator:

[27] D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996) 9–10.

[28] Cf. J. M. G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus, Against Apion* (Leiden, 2007) xxvi–viii. On the anti-Judaism of Domitian, see E. M. Smallwood, 'Domitian's Attitude toward the Jews and Judaism', *CPh* 51 (1956) 1–13 at 2–11; M. H. Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (Tübingen, 2013) 95–110. On Trajan's anti-Judaism, see M. Goodman, 'Trajan and the Origins of Roman Hostility to the Jews', *P&P* 182 (2004) 3–29, with the criticism by C. Weikert, *Von Jerusalem zu Aelia Capitolina: Die römische Politik gegenüber den Juden von Vespasian bis Hadrian* (Göttingen, 2016) 178–84.

[29] Cf. L. Gilhaus, 'Physische Gewalt in der griechisch-römischen Antike: Ein Forschungsbericht', *H-Soz-Kult*, 13.07.2017, available online at www.hsozkult.de/literaturereview/id/forschungsberichte-3014.

the instigation and perpetration of violence is aimed at inflicting physical harm or at destroying the lives and properties of others. This prioritisation has a precedent in many Roman-period discourses, which conceive of the subject predominantly in terms of physical violence. The latter erupts, it is commonly agreed among ancient writers, under conditions where law(fulness) is absent. Against this background, Greek and Latin authors can portray Rome, its political representatives and in particular the emperor as guarantors of law and peacefulness. Law (*ius*) and statutes (*leges*) become a precondition of Roman peace. Their imposition marks the moment when true peacefulness is achieved for the empire's subjects, whereas the absence of laws characterises the uncivilised barbarian.[30]

However, physical violence, while exemplary, is neither the only nor the most paradigmatic form of violence. Violence also has a structural manifestation and can be cultural or symbolic.[31] In what follows, I use 'cultural' or 'symbolic violence' to describe violence that social actors perpetrate by way of cultural representations, for instance in speech, texts, gestures or material objects.[32] 'Structural violence' refers to violence which 'is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances'. Structural violence, unlike physical or cultural violence, is a pervasive aspect of the social and political order. It underlies the structure of governance and becomes manifest in the state's monopoly on the ordering of social relations by coercion. This monopoly is the state's attempt to objectify the very structure of political domination and

[30] Law and peace: Cicero, *On the Consular Provinces* 19; V. Nutton, 'The Beneficial Ideology', in P. D. A. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker (eds.), *Imperialism in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1978) 209–22 at 210–15. Cf. M. P. Lavan, 'Peace and Empire: *Pacare*, *Pacatus*, and the Language of Roman Imperialism', in E. P. Moloney and M. S. Williams (eds.), *Peace and Reconciliation in the Classical World* (New York, 2017) 102–14.

[31] For the threefold division, employed with varying terminology, see H. Saner, *Hoffnung und Gewalt* (Basel, 1982) 73–95; J. Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London, 1996) 31; S. Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York, 2008) 11. See also the General Introduction, p. 3.

[32] Cf. Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, 196, 201–207, and Bremmer, this volume, p. 48. P. Bourdieu (with L. J. D. Wacquant), *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago, 1992) 167–68 employs a different notion of symbolic violence, 'which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity'. Social actors internalise and hence legitimise the ideas and structures that the social order imposes on them, and their complicity in the subordination ensures that the dominant order does not need to apply direct coercion. Bourdieu's terminology confounds violence and domination, no doubt intentionally: J. Rehmann, *Theories of Ideology: The Powers of Alienation and Subjection* (Leiden, 2013) 229–33. For this reason, its usefulness as a term of historical analysis remains limited.

economic exploitation it has created.[33] All three manifestations of violence – physical, cultural and structural – must be studied in relation to one another. The latter two are inscribed into the system in permanence, yet they are also subtler.[34] They are the 'hidden or secret violence out of which images of people are shaped, experiences of groups are coerced and agency itself is engendered'.[35]

The impact of cultural violence is often underestimated. Anti-Jewish sentiments, it is held, found their expression in the 'passing jibes' of late Republican and Augustan authors or 'snide remarks' in later literary texts, becoming more consistent only with the violent military confrontations of the later first and early second centuries.[36] A similar misapprehension may account for the suggestion that the anti-Jewish sentiments propounded in Cicero's *Pro Flacco* in 59 BCE, shortly after Pompey's conquest of Judaea, are explicable primarily by the conventions of Roman forensic oratory.[37] The same reluctance to consider a literary text as an example of cultural violence may be held responsible for the view that the anti-Jewish stereotypes presented in Book 5 of Tacitus' *Histories* are owed predominantly to the generic expectations and conventions of Latin ethnography.[38]

[33] J. Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (1969) 167–91 at 171. Cf. Saner, *Hoffnung und Gewalt*, 80; Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, 31. Objectification: Žižek, *Violence*, 1–15.

[34] M. Staudigl, *Phänomenologie der Gewalt* (Cham, 2015) 261, 280–82. Cf. M. Schroer, 'Gewalt ohne Gesicht: Zur Notwendigkeit einer umfassenden Gewaltanalyse', *Leviathan* 28 (2000) 434–51 at 445–49; M. Endress, 'Grundlagenprobleme einer Soziologie der Gewalt: Zur vermeintlichen Alternative zwischen körperlicher und struktureller Gewalt', in M. Staudigl (ed.), *Gesichter der Gewalt: Beiträge aus phänomenologischer Sicht* (Paderborn, 2014) 87–113 at 105–109.

[35] A. Kleinman, 'The Violences of Everyday Life: the Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence', in V. Das et al. (eds.), *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, 2000) 226–41 at 228.

[36] J. G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 1983) 55 (quote), 58–59, 62–65; E. S. Gruen, 'Romans and Jews', in J. McInerney (ed.), *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Malden, 2014) 423–36 at 430–31 (quote), and Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA, 2002) 6–7, 15–53; M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London, 2007) 445–68; J. E. Atkins, *Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2018) 148. For this view, see already Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* 5, 538–40.

[37] A. J. Marshall, 'Flaccus and the Jews of Asia (Cicero *Pro Flacco* 28.67–69)', *Phoenix* 29 (1975) 139–54 at 141–42; M. Ben Ze'ēv, 'The Myth of Cicero's Anti-Judaism', in G. K. Hasselhoff and M. Strothmann (eds.), *Religio licita? Rom und die Juden* (Berlin, 2017) 105–34. *Contra*: Yavetz, 'Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity', 11–13.

[38] R. Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum: Der Judenexkurs des Tacitus im Rahmen der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie* (Stuttgart, 2002) 165–70, 221–22; S. Panzram, 'Der Jerusalemer Tempel und das Rom der Flavier', in J. Hahn (ed.), *Zerstörungen des Jerusalemer Tempels: Geschehen – Wahrnehmung – Bewältigung* (Tübingen, 2002) 166–82 at 179. Some attempt to destabilise Tacitus' anti-Jewish bias, detecting sympathy and irony in his account: A. Feldherr, 'Barbarians

If we ignore the cultural violence in these discourses, however, we fail to appreciate how they partake in the symbolic legitimation of Roman superiority. Whatever the respective authors' motivations or personal beliefs, their very speech-act becomes complicit in the act of perpetuating the direct violence perpetrated against the political, military, ethnic or religious other. These speech-acts likewise reflect the permanence of Roman structural violence, which is perpetrated by the dominant political culture from within which these authors originate.

Scholars have noticed the progressively excessive displays of violence in texts and imagery since the first century CE. Were they reflective of an actual increase in physical violence during the imperial period? The question is not an easy one to answer. On the one hand, judicial savagery and penal violence inflicted on lower-class citizens appear to have increased in severity over time.[39] On the other hand, a straightforward relation between overall violence and its dramatisation in texts and images cannot be established easily.[40] The question itself, however, may stem from a false fixation on direct violence and the complementary misappraisal of cultural violence – as if the latter existed only in a relation of reflexivity to something else, the proverbial smoke where there is fire. Their interdependence is not so much one-directionally causative as it is based upon a less determinative relationalism. Cultural violence may (re-)emerge in consequence of or, alternatively, generate justification for physical violence, but neither one should be held directly determinant of the respective other. Cultural violence is a semantic operation which, rather than merely registering and archiving, as it were, physical violence, evokes and reinforces all forms of violence, and renders them acceptable. Violence becomes social

II: Tacitus' Jews', in A. Feldherr (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians* (Cambridge, 2009) 301–16; E. S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton, 2011) 179–98. *Contra*: P. Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA, 1997) 31–33; H. Cancik, 'Religionsgeschichtsschreibung bei Tacitus: Zur Darstellung der germanischen und jüdischen Religion in Tacitus' *Germania* und *Historiae*', in W. Spickermann, with H. Cancik and J. Rüpke (eds.), *Religion in den germanischen Provinzen Roms* (Tübingen, 2001) 49–69 at 59–63 (repr. in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, vol. 2 [Tübingen, 2008] 42–61 at 52–56), and 'Der antike Antisemitismus und seine Rezeption', in C. von Braun and E.-M. Ziege (eds.), *Das 'bewegliche' Vorurteil: Aspekte des internationalen Antisemitismus* (Würzburg, 2004) 63–80 at 68–73.

[39] R. MacMullen, 'Judicial Savagery in the Roman Empire', *Chiron* 16 (1986) 147–66 (repr. in his *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary* [Princeton, 1990] 204–17); F. Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*, vol. 2 (Chapel Hill, 2004) 120–50.

[40] D. Rohmann, *Gewalt und politischer Wandel im 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Munich, 2006); M. Zimmermann, 'Zur Deutung von Gewaltdarstellungen', in M. Zimmermann (ed.), *Extreme Formen von Gewalt in Bild und Text des Altertums* (Munich, 2009) 7–47 at 40; S. Faust, *Schlachtenbilder der römischen Kaiserzeit: Erzählerische Darstellungskonzepte in der Reliefkunst von Traian bis Septimius Severus* (Rahden, 2012) 118–20.

knowledge because it is constituted and substantiated over time through cultural representations.

Cultural Violence and Religion: *IVDAEA CAPTA*

It has long been realised that the Roman military suppression of the revolt in Judaea, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem in 70, provided the Flavians with a potent foundation narrative to buttress their recently established position of power in Rome and across the wider Mediterranean. Early Flavian coinage further illustrates this hypothesis. A hitherto unique *aureus* with the legend *IVDAEA RECEPTA* on the reverse, which its first editors date to the period immediately after the fall of Jerusalem in September 70, shows a female standing beside a palm tree.[41] Following an established numismatic pattern, the coin legend advertises the 'readmission' of the province's population into the empire and celebrates the recovery of control over Roman territory temporarily lost.[42]

Already prior to the capture of Jerusalem, however, but in anticipation of complete victory, Flavian coins with the legend *IVDAEA* on the reverse insinuate a less clement interpretation of the conflict. They display the female seated in defeat underneath a trophy or palm tree[43] – an iconography of humiliation and surrender on which the well-known coin series with the respective legends *IVDAEA DEVICTA* and *IVDAEA CAPTA* will build. With the *IVDAEA CAPTA* series in particular, issued for the first time in 71 in connection with the joint Roman triumph of Vespasian and Titus,[44] the Flavian mint revives a late Republican and Augustan motif (not reutilised by later Julio-Claudian emperors) to mark the moment of 'capture' of foreign land and foreground the 'captivity' of its people. In Augustan-period examples (*AEGYPTO CAPTA* or *ARMENIA CAPTA*)

[41] H. M. Cotton, G. Gambash and H. Gitler, 'IVDAEA RECEPTA', *Israel Numismatic Research* 8 (2013) 89–104. Cf. M. Vitale, '*Iudaea recepta*: Eine neue Legende auf Goldmünzen Vespasians', *AncSoc* 44 (2014) 243–55.

[42] Other examples are discussed by K. Christ, 'Antike Siegesprägungen', repr. in his *Griechische Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1996) 78–113, who paraphrases *RECEPTA* as 'Wiederaufnahme in Gnaden' (p. 88).

[43] *RIC*² II.1 Vespasian 1–4 (late 69–early 70 CE). Cf. nos. 1315, 1332 and 1531 (70 CE, with *RIC*² II.1, p. 46).

[44] C. M. Kraay, 'The Bronze Coinage of Vespasian: Classification and Attribution', in R. A. G. Carson and C. M. Kraay (eds.), *Scripta Nummaria Romana* (London, 1978) 47–57 at 50, 53–55; *RIC*² II.1, pp. 23–24, 33–35, 184, 187, *passim*. Cf. the corresponding coin series with the legend IOYΔAIAΣ EAΛΩKYIAΣ issued in Judaea: *RPC* II 2310–13, with D. Barag, 'The Palestinian "Judaea Capta" Coins of Vespasian and Titus and the Era on the Coins of Agrippa II Minted under the Flavians', *NC* NS 18 (1978) 14–23 at 19–23.

and their Flavian revival (the *IVDAEA CAPTA* series), the legend signifies the subjugation of an external enemy, conquest of foreign territory, its annexation in the form of a province and the enslavement of the population.[45]

Some contemporaries viewed the violent events in Judaea as one consequence of the civil commotion of the late 60s CE,[46] in light of which one cannot overestimate the Flavian decision to cast their military victory as a triumph over external barbarians. The drastic iconography on the reverse of the *IVDAEA CAPTA* coinage emphasises the revised Flavian view of Judaea and its Jewish rebels when it highlights the theme of barbarism legitimately overcome by Roman military force, most conspicuously through the image of the Jewish captive depicted as a female barbarian who mourns her defeat and surrender to Roman rule.[47]

The depiction of the Jews of Judaea on Flavian coins as the barbarian other served concrete military and political needs. Flavian coins expediently fashioned a foreign enemy out of a native revolt within a Roman province. They produced, by a convenient sleight of hand, an external threat over which Vespasian and Titus were able to claim a legitimate triumph. By virtue of its overexposure, this imagery has become all too familiar to the historian; in the process of its scholarly objectification, the message has been thoroughly trivialised. At several removes from the imagery's historical context, we underestimate how violent a visual message the Flavians adopted in order to denigrate the Jewish enemy in Judaea, and how the Roman imagery embodies social violence.[48] The public humiliation of the barbarian enemy on coinage is one manifestation of cultural violence.

[45] Christ, 'Antike Siegesprägungen', 82–101; M. Vitale, *Das Imperium in Wort und Bild: Römische Darstellungsformen beherrschter Gebiete in Inschriftenmonumenten, Münzprägungen und Literatur* (Stuttgart, 2017) 328–34, esp. p. 332. That Vespasian modelled the triumph over Judaea after Augustus' triumph at Actium, as part of a comprehensive *imitatio Augusti*, is suggested by E. Rosso, 'Le thème de la *res publica restituta* dans le monnayage de Vespasien: pérennité du "modèle augustéen" entre citations, réinterprétations et dévoiement', in F. Hurlet and B. Mineo (eds.), *Le principat d'Auguste: réalités et représentations du pouvoir autour de la Res publica restituta* (Rennes, 2009) 209–42.

[46] Cf. G. H. van Kooten, 'The Jewish War and the Roman Civil War of 68–69 CE: Jewish, Pagan, and Christian Perspectives', in M. Popović (ed.), *The Jewish Revolt against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Leiden, 2011) 419–50.

[47] J. M. Cody, 'Conquerors and Conquered on Flavian Coins', in A. J. Boyle and W. A. Dominik (eds.), *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* (Leiden, 2003) 103–23 at 105–13; Vitale, *Imperium in Wort und Bild*, 225–31.

[48] Cf. Christ, 'Antike Siegesprägungen', 101 on the singularity of this Roman 'thème de la violence'. A. G. Keddie, 'Iudaea Capta vs. Mother Zion: the Flavian Discourse on Judaeans and Its Delegitimation in 4 Ezra', *JSJ* 49 (2018) 498–550 at 501, 510–14, 522, discusses the *IVDAEA CAPTA* coinage with the help of Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence (above, n. 32).

The inscription on the now lost arch of 81, which stood at the entrance to the Circus Maximus in Rome, took considerable pains to celebrate Titus' 'taming' of the *gens* of the Jews and his destruction of their *urbs*, Jerusalem. Tellingly, it was under Titus that the *IVDAEA CAPTA* coinage of the early 70s, which had not been struck for several years, was revived so that the derogatory iconography of barbarism subdued by legitimate Roman force was not forgotten.[49] Therefore, when the inscription on the arch used the metaphor of forceful domestication it was hardly an instrument only in support of claims 'aimed at promotion of the Flavians rather than denigration of the Jews'.[50]

The Flavian discourse of taming the barbarian enemy draws on a long-established Republican and Julio-Claudian tradition. The motif is enshrined perhaps most prominently in the Roman triumphal display and consequent artistic depiction of conquered lands, cities and peoples, which became a regular feature from the time of the Second Punic War. This celebration of imperial violence reaches perhaps unprecedented heights in the violent depiction of the barbarian enemy in Roman battle scenes from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus. The same cultural violence is prefigured, however, in Pompey's triumph of 61 BCE and the statuary in his theatre-temple in the Campus Martius, both of which exhibited female representations of conquered *nationes*. Depictions of defeated peoples were also on display in Augustus' Porticus ad nationes and were paraded in his funeral procession. Last but not least, the same iconography was disseminated among provincial communities, as we know from Aphrodisias in Caria.[51] As will be shown momentarily, the theme of taming and subjugation acquired a particular resonance for Flavian-period

[49] Titus' Arch: *CIL* VI 944. For the metaphor of 'taming' the barbarian enemy, see Cicero, *On the Consular Provinces* 5, 19, 31–33. *IVDAEA CAPTA* under Titus: *RIC*^{2} II.1, pp. 184, 187. The recurrence of the coin type under Titus, which was now less ubiquitous than in the early 70s, does not amount to a consistent Flavian '*Iudaea capta* discourse', as Keddie, 'Iudaea Capta vs. Mother Zion', 500, *passim*, claims. An alleged Domitianic *IVDAEA CAPTA sestertius* (thus *RIC* II 280) is rightly considered false in *RIC*^{2} II.1, p. 399; neither the *IVDAEA* coinage of Nerva nor that of Hadrian imitates the *IVDAEA CAPTA* type, *pace* Keddie, 'Iudaea Capta vs. Mother Zion', 512.

[50] *Pace* W. Horbury, *Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian* (Cambridge, 2014) 134.

[51] For Republican examples, see P. J. Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in Visual Arts* (Cambridge, 2002) 104–21. Pompey: J. M. Scott, *Bacchius Iudaeus: a Denarius Commemorating Pompey's Victory over Judea* (Göttingen, 2015) 14–30. Augustus (and Aphrodisias): H. Cancik, 'Die "Repraesentation" von "Provinzen" (*nationes*, *gentes*) in Rom', in H. Cancik and J. Rüpke (eds.), *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion* (Tübingen, 1997) 129–43 (repr. in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze* I, 211–26); R. R. R. Smith, *The Marble Reliefs from the Julio-Claudian Sebasteion* (Mainz, 2013) 86–121. Battle scenes and violence: T. Hölscher, 'Bilder der Macht und Herrschaft', in A. Nünnerich-Asmus (ed.), *Traian* (Mainz, 2002) 127–44 at 130–40; Faust, *Schlachtenbilder der römischen Kaiserzeit*.

Jews, but the *ethnos* of the *Judaei* was prominently included already among those whose defeat the victory monuments of Pompey and Augustus perpetuated for Roman and provincial viewers.

We must read against this discriminatory background other early Flavian coin issues and building projects in the city of Rome, which relate the victory over the external enemy in Judaea to the inauguration of a new age of peace for Rome and its empire.[52] One predominant message of Vespasian's Templum Pacis, begun in 71 and inaugurated in 75, was the celebration of Flavian peace and civilisation restored, rather than merely of victory over Judaean rebels. This message was underlined by the public display in the precinct of golden sacred utensils from the Second Temple in Jerusalem, which had previously been carried in Vespasian's and Titus' triumph. The Flavians invited their Roman audience to marvel at the despoiled objects and view the defeated Jewish enemy, at long last triumphantly domesticated, as a past obstacle to the restoration of peace and civilisation – a visual message that the other objects on display in the precinct also propagated.[53] Another arch, still extant, its dedicatory inscription datable after Titus' death, celebrated the *princeps*' deification with explicit iconographic reference to the joint triumph, by way of causal juxtaposition of his recent apotheosis and the capture of Jerusalem in 70.[54]

The pattern of coin distribution in the early 70s suggests that the *IVDAEA CAPTA* type was aimed primarily at the population of Rome and the Italian municipalities. Its audiences and its purpose – the influencing of public opinion in Roman Italy – were thus identical to the ones that the Flavian building projects in the capital were addressing. Yet we must not underestimate the possibility that the Flavian message was embraced by the empire's population more widely. Those amenable to the Flavian point of view would have included, for instance, the victorious veterans of Vespasian's and Titus' *bellum Iudaicum*, many of whom, having been rewarded for their military achievements in the war, returned to positions

[52] T. R. Stevenson, 'Personifications on the Coinage of Vespasian', *AClass* 53 (2010) 181–205 at 188–90. Cf. F. Millar, 'Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome', in J. C. Edmondson et al. (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford, 2005) 101–28; W. Eck, 'Rom und das jüdische Volk: Orte der Niederlagen und triumphale Erinnerung', in E. Stein-Hölkeskamp and K.-J. Hölkeskamp (eds.), *Erinnerungsorte der Antike* (Munich, 2006) 570–85 at 573–78; J. S. McLaren, 'The Jews in Rome during the Flavian Period', *Antichthon* 47 (2013) 156–72 at 158–64.

[53] Cf. Josephus, *Judaean War* 7.158–62. See A. Bravi, 'Angemessene Bilder und praktischer Sinn der Kunst: Griechische Bildwerke im Templum Pacis', in N. Kramer and C. Reitz (eds.), *Tradition und Erneuerung: Mediale Strategien in der Zeit der Flavier* (Berlin, 2010) 535–51, esp. pp. 541–43; P. L. Tucci, *The Temple of Peace in Rome* (Cambridge, 2017) 216–44.

[54] *CIL* VI 945; M. Pfanner, *Der Titusbogen* (Mainz, 1983); R. H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (Brussels, 1996) 166–72.

of recognition and influence in their home communities. The status of these men at home was predicated on their successful participation in military victory over a barbarian enemy.[55]

Was the aggressive response to the violent uprising in Judaea solely based on the understanding that the Jewish rebels, having committed atrocities against Romans, 'ceased to be considered as normal subjects of the empire'?[56] I suggest that deeper-seated anti-Jewish sentiments played a role in the perpetration of Roman cultural violence. The Flavians exploited a prevalent stereotype, namely if the Jews were 'in many respects barbarians like all the others, they were in some respects a little more so'.[57] Moreover, lest we believe the aggressive Flavian portrayal of Judaism merely to have expressed Roman ethnographic conventions, I note that '*religious* customs played a more central role in Greek and Roman ethnography of the Jews than in that of other peoples'.[58]

When xenophobic sentiments coalesced with religious stereotypes, they were not applied to ancient Judaism alone. Writers like Seneca the Younger in the first century or Tacitus, Suetonius and Diogenes of Oenoanda in the second felt comfortable juxtaposing the superstitious beliefs and repulsive ritual practices of the Jews with those of other Eastern peoples, in particular the Egyptians and Syrians.[59] Cultural violence of such kind served to re-establish hierarchies of power as members of the dominant political culture responded to the imperial-period mobility of foreign people and deities. The fact that they accentuated the theme of religious alterity should compel us to consider the dominant culture's appropriation of religious stereotypes in the perpetration of violence. That the semantic juxtaposition of religion and cultural violence included other subject

[55] *CIL* v 7007, x 6659, xi 390–91 (and probably xi 1602), *AE* 1903, 368, and 1952, 153. Cf. *CIL* viii 12536 = *ILTun* 893.

[56] G. Gambash, *Rome and Provincial Resistance* (London, 2015) 149–51.

[57] Yavetz, 'Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity', 13, and 'Latin Authors on Jews and Dacians', *Historia* 47 (1998) 77–107 at 105. B. H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004) 481 suggests that the Roman ethnic stereotyping of Judaism differed indeed from the stereotypes applied to other Eastern peoples.

[58] R. Bloch, 'Jew, Jews II: Greco-Roman Antiquity', in C. Helmer et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. 14 (Berlin, 2017) 155–58 at 156 (emphasis added). On the import of religious themes in the Roman stereotyping of Judaism, see also Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 466–74.

[59] Seneca the Younger, *On Superstition* fr. 34, 41–42 Haase = 68, 73 Vottero; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85; Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius* 36; Diogenes of Oinoanda fr. 126–27 Smith = *IJO* ii 222. Cf. L. Bocciolini Palagi, 'La polemica antigiudaica di Seneca: temi e problemi', in *Cultura e ideologia da Cicerone a Seneca* (Florence, 1981) 149–75; K. Stebnicka, '"Superstitious and Abominable": Jews in the Epicurean Account of Diogenes of Oenoanda', *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 12 (2014) 25–32 at 27–30. On these associations, cf. Barclay, 'Politics of Contempt', 114–18.

communities among its targets entails that we place violence against the Jews in a wider systemic context.

The reluctance to identify in these emic discourses a strong religious dimension may be owed at least in part to the same intellectual tradition that was sketched above. Whereas scholars in Religious Studies traditionally have identified religious and racial prejudices as salient reasons for the ancient hatred of the Jews, many ancient historians emphasise a different motivation: Roman institutional violence against Jews was motivated predominantly by political concerns, rather than by considerations of race or religion. As Theodor Mommsen put it, echoing eighteenth-century views, the Roman response to the Jewish rebellions may have been violent; it was motivated not by faith, however, but by power.[60] The repeated instances of Roman imperial suppression of Jewish populations – in Rome, Alexandria or Jerusalem in the year 70 – are therefore interpreted as unfortunate yet intermittent policing measures warranted by the political necessity of having to govern a tributary empire in which economic security and socio-political control were the state's foremost concern.[61]

It must suffice to highlight only the problematic historiographic pedigree of these views. To Gibbon, Roman-period Judaism showed as much aggressive hostility to Rome as the latter did towards the Jews, from the Judaean War and the destruction of the Second Temple to the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132–35. In one of the most overt and problematic of multiple Tacitean echoes in the *History of the Decline and Fall*, Gibbon maintained that Judaism hated all other peoples and in turn was hated by them. Yet unlike Jewish hatred of Rome, Roman aggression towards the Jews was never religiously motivated, Gibbon maintained. Rome always tolerated Jewish religion and actually enabled 'less dangerous gratifications' among diaspora Judaism, once the Jews had abandoned 'their dream of prophecy and conquest'.[62] Emil Schürer's monumental *History of the Jewish People*

[60] Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* 5, 542. Cf. E. Baltrusch, 'Bewunderung, Duldung, Ablehnung: Das Urteil über die Juden in der griechisch-römischen Literatur', *Klio* 80 (1998) 403–21 at 418–19: 'die römische Judenfeindschaft war . . . politischer Natur'.

[61] L. V. Rutgers, 'Roman Policy towards the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century CE', *ClAnt* 13 (1994) 56–74; W. Ameling, 'Market-Place und Gewalt: Die Juden in Alexandrien 38 n.Chr.', *WJA* NS 27 (2003) 71–123 at 72–74 and esp. p. 122; J. B. Rives, 'Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple', in Edmondson et al., *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 145–66 at 165; Horbury, *Jewish War*, 136.

[62] Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall* 1, 517–18. The indebtedness of the *History*'s anti-Judaism to Tacitus' anti-Jewish and anti-Christian sentiments is discussed by W. Nippel, 'Der Historiker des Römischen Reiches: Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)', in E. Gibbon, *Verfall und Untergang des römischen Imperiums: Bis zum Ende des Reiches im Westen*, trans. M. Walter and W. Kumpmann (Munich, 2003) 7–114 at 50–51.

hence extols the 'cosmopolitan characteristic of pagan piety', which allowed Rome to tolerate, even respect, local religious sensibilities in Judaea during the six decades leading up to the Judaean War. But these valiant efforts were largely in vain since insurrection 'in the name of religion' was smouldering among the Jews, until the conflict finally erupted in 66.[63]

Hence, scholarship feels uncomfortable evaluating possible Roman religious motivations in the revolt in Judaea and its aftermath. The predominant modern view continues to be that the imperial power showed indifference to the choice of gods or the religious customs of subject polities, even if Rome displayed considerable interest in the scrutinising of whether local religious institutions were in alignment with the dominant political, social and economic order in the empire.[64] The conflict between Rome and Jerusalem, in other words, can be portrayed as one that was predicated upon fundamental civilisational differences: the revolt was based upon a struggle between religious and secular nationalism. Hence, one finds among some scholars the deterministic position that there existed a 'historically conditioned antagonism' between Rome and Jerusalem, the ultimate cause of their conflict; others establish a dichotomy between Rome's enlightened, or 'Western', religious attitudes and the religious zeal of the Jewish rebels, which at least one scholar has likened to Near Eastern Islamist fundamentalism.[65] Modern portraits of Roman state violence, it seems, continue to evoke an imperial world in which religious motivations of violence can be sidelined. On this view, the coercion of Rome's provincial subjects responded to (religious) alterity much like the enlightened despot of early modern political theory who, while tolerant of religious diversity even when he disapproved of it, was expected to react

[63] E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–AD 135)*, vol. I, rev. and ed. G. Vermès et al. (London, 1973) 356–57, 378–88, 455–70, 485–86. The argument is found already in Schürer's *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1874) 249, 299–312, 323–25, but 'der kosmopolitische Zug, welcher die damalige heidnische Frömmigkeit charakterisi[e]rt' first appeared in the *Lehrbuch*'s second edition, published as *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, vol. I (Leipzig, 1890) 402–403.

[64] For this view, see in general C. Ando, 'The Rites of Others', in J. C. Edmondson and A. Keith (eds.), *Roman Literary Cultures: Domestic Politics, Revolutionary Poetics, Civic Spectacles* (Toronto, 2016) 254–77.

[65] M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 AD* (Edinburgh, 1989) xv, a strained parallel that R. Deines, 'Gab es eine jüdische Freiheitsbewegung?', in M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n.Chr.*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen, 2011) 440–46 nonetheless takes pains to defend. 'Historisch bedingter Widerspruch': E. Baltrusch, *Die Juden und das Römische Reich: Geschichte einer konfliktreichen Beziehung* (Darmstadt, 2002) 156–57.

with force to civil disobedience and entitled to suppress challenges to the state's control over any political, military and economic resources.[66]

The evidence does not support this view, at least not unequivocally. As has been observed before,[67] the *IVDAEA CAPTA* coinage foregrounds an almost inevitable semantic confusion. Latin *Iudaea* referenced the Roman province of the same name, while *Iudaeus* on rare occasions denoted one's place of residence there regardless of any implied Jewishness.[68] Yet the legend and motif surely targeted Judaea's Jewish rebels, the barbarian enemy. To compound the semantic confusion, the same word, *Iudaeus* (like Greek Ἰουδαῖος), referenced also the diaspora Jews living elsewhere in the Roman Mediterranean whatever their geographical origin. This confusion was predicated upon the refusal on the part of the Roman state to conceptualise Jewish cultural and religious life in the diaspora in separation from a Judaean identity. Rome was reluctant to imagine the diaspora without the political and juridical institutions of the Jews in Judaea.[69] This Roman insistence on a politico-juridical or ethnicity-centred taxonomy becomes even more striking when we consider the fact that Latin *Iudaeus* could be deployed to self-define membership in a group based on shared cultural and religious practices and discourses, distinct from the category of origin, as early as the Republican period.[70] A similar political refusal to disaggregate ethnic and cultural or religious identities characterises Rome's approach towards other diasporic communities in the empire.

[66] Under the name of toleration, Atkins, *Roman Political Thought*, 144–52 reapplies this model of state-controlled religious cohabitation, which the hegemonic power guarantees unless its ideological foundations are challenged, to evidence ranging from the Bacchanalian affair to the Roman treatment of Jews and early Christians.

[67] Yavetz, 'Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity', 17–18; M. Goodman, 'Diaspora Reactions to the Destruction of the Temple', in J. D. G. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, AD 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids, 1999) 27–38 at 31.

[68] Cf. F. Beutler and G. Kremer, '*Domo Iudaeus*: Zwei neue Grabinschriften aus Carnuntum', *Tyche* 28 (2013) 5–20, where *domo Iudaeus* means 'Judaean by virtue of his place of residence'. For *domus* = 'domicile', see Alfenus Varus, *Digesta* 50.16.203 with D. Nörr, '*Origo*: Studien zur Orts-, Stadt- und Reichszugehörigkeit in der Antike', *RHD* 31 (1963) 525–600 at 528–31. Cf. H. Solin, 'Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt: Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände', in *ANRW* II.29.2 (1983) 587–789, 1222–49 at 649. *Pace* Keddie, 'Iudaea Capta vs. Mother Zion', 509–10, the female captive on the *CAPTA* coinage certainly does not represent 'the entire Judaean *ethnos* in the homeland and diaspora'.

[69] Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum*, 156–57; B. Eckhardt, 'Rom und die Juden: ein Kategorienfehler? Zur römischen Sicht auf die Iudaei in später Republik und frühem Prinzipat', in Hasselhoff and Strothmann, *Religio licita?*, 13–53.

[70] E.g. *JIWE* I 7 (probably first century BCE). Examples are more numerous from the second century CE onwards: Solin, 'Juden und Syrer', 647–49; Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment*, 267–86.

In the case of Judaism, this confusion surely fuelled an already existing stereotype, namely that not only the rebels in Judaea but also the Jews in the diaspora were beyond the pale of the civilising project Rome proffered to its subjects. The Flavian message, in other words, could be embedded in a wider discriminatory narrative in which *all* Jews, because of their (imagined) origin in Judaea, but also because of the conceptually separate matter of their cultural and religious practices, were placed firmly on one side of the traditional divide between barbarism and Graeco-Roman civilisation.[71] This is how Tacitus, a little more than one generation after the sack of Jerusalem, portrayed Judaism.[72]

A similar conceptual confusion underlies the 'Jewish tax', which Vespasian introduced in 70/71. It may conceivably be argued that his transformation of the half-shekel contribution of the Jews to the Jerusalem Temple into a tax to finance the rebuilding of the Capitoline temple in Rome was based in some measure upon the understanding that Jewishness meant membership in one common *gens* or ἔθνος whatever the actual place of residence of its members. And yet, the Flavian decision to redirect to one religious shrine a monetary payment that had been earmarked for the upkeep of another certainly was understood as a punitive measure undergirded by considerations of religious significance.[73] Moreover, the decision to charge members of Jewish households across the Roman Mediterranean surely shifted the emphasis from the question of origin towards the cultural and religious values defining Jewishness in these households, in particular after 70. When the Egyptian fiscal documents reference the tax as the 'price of two denars of the Judaeans' (τιμὴ δηναρίων δύο Ἰουδαίων) or alternatively, the 'Judaean tribute' (Ἰουδαϊκὸν τέλεσμα, the standard designation since approximately 90/92),[74] they presuppose fuzzy criteria of Jewish identity in the Eastern diaspora.

That we must expect conceptual fuzziness (rather than semantic, let alone ontological consistency) is best illustrated by Domitian's

[71] Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 67: *barbara superstitio*; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 3.7.21; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85.5, *Histories* 2.4, 5.5, 5.8; Juvenal, *Satires* 14.100. On the motif of barbarism in connection with the Jews, see also above, n. 47.

[72] Tacitus, *Histories* 5.8.2–3, 13.1; Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 188–92.

[73] Cf. McLaren, 'Jews in Rome during the Flavian Period', 163.

[74] Josephus, *Judaean War* 6.216, 7.218–19; Cassius Dio 66.7.2; *CPJ* I, pp. 80–83, II, pp. 111–16 with nos. 160–229, 421, and III 460. For the Egyptian evidence, see C. Salvaterra, 'L'amministrazione fiscale in una società multietnica: un esempio dall'Egitto romano sulla base di P. Carlsberg 421', in L. Mooren (ed.), *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Leuven, 2000) 287–348 at 291–304. Cf. below, n. 107.

notoriously harsh employment of the *fiscus Iudaicus*, the fiscal agency to administer the Jewish tax.[75] Informers reported not only those who concealed their *origo* in order that they might evade the 'tribute imposed on the (sc. Judaean) *gens*', but also those others who, it was alleged, 'lived a Jewish life' without having declared themselves to be Jewish. Suetonius' terminology moves between two poles. The emphasis on the term *origo* suggests that fiscal liabilities were determined by place of origin, which was defined, we must assume, geographically, with the focus firmly on Judaea. The phrase *Iudaicam vivere vitam* foregrounds an alternative taxonomical criterion, namely the choice to partake in cultural and religious behaviours that some identified as traits of an identifiably Jewish lifestyle in the city of Rome; the Roman *delatores* certainly did. The Latin phrase also implies that there were many who did not confess their affiliation with the synagogue, but neither did they relate their Judaising tendencies to the ethnic component of Judaism. Moreover, there was a perception among non-Jewish observers, Suetonius further implies, that there existed something which looked to them like a definable, common Judaism. Judging from Graeco-Roman authors contributing on this matter, its salient characteristics will have included the belief in one god and valorisation of the Torah, abstention from pork and generally a compliance with specific purity regulations, circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath.[76] There emerges from these data an admittedly tentative picture of first-century Jewish (and Judaising) identities in Rome and Roman Italy, albeit one that shows a religious focus. Its peculiar features cannot be defined through one monothetic, let alone ethnic classification. They must be described with the help of polythetic taxonomies, which, by their very nature, are not necessarily stable.[77]

[75] Suetonius, *Life of Domitian* 12.2. It is possible but perhaps not very likely that the *fiscus Iudaicus* was created by Domitian rather than Vespasian. The matter hinges in part on the nature of the procuratorship *ad capitularia Iudaeorum*, which is attested once (*CIL* VI 8604, a Flavian freedman). The inscription has been dated to the Domitianic period and is sometimes thought to apply to the *fiscus Iudaicus*, but neither assumption can be verified beyond doubt.

[76] Cf. S. J. D. Cohen, 'Common Judaism in Greek and Latin Authors', in F. E. Udoh (ed.), *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders* (Notre Dame, 2008) 69–87; Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment*, 49–62.

[77] For which see already Smith, *Imagining Religion*, 1–18. *Contra*: Goodman, 'Diaspora Reactions', 32, and J. M. G. Barclay, '"Jews" and "Christians" in the Eyes of Roman Authors, *c.* 100 CE', in J. Schwartz and P. J. Tomson (eds.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History* (Leiden, 2014) 313–26 at 322–23, both arguing that a primarily *ethnic* definition underlies Suetonius' text.

Victims of Violence

The discriminatory narrative that the *IVDAEA CAPTA* coinage exploited in the aftermath of the Roman victory in Judaea, in a climate of Flavian triumphalism, must have nourished, reinforced and legitimised anti-Jewish feelings. A funerary inscription from the territory of Puteoli offers a poignant illustration:

> Claudia Aster, Jerusalemite, a captive. Tiberius Claudius [Pro]culus, a freedman of the Augustus, took care (of this). I ask you that you make by the Law that no one – no one – tears down the inscription and that you take care (of this). She lived twenty-five years.[78]

The epitaph commemorates Claudia Aster, who was taken prisoner during Titus' capture of Jerusalem, became the slave of an imperial freedman from Puteoli by the name of Tiberius Claudius Proculus,[79] and was manumitted by her master before she died at the age of twenty-five years. Based on onomastic criteria alone, it is safe to assume that Claudia Aster was Jewish. When Aster occurs as a female cognomen, the name is in the majority of cases a Latin calque of the Hebrew personal name אסתר, Est(h)er.[80] In the absence of any unmistakable onomastic clues, overt references to the Scriptures or clear Jewish funerary epigraphic formulae, her manumitter's religious identity is less straightforward to ascertain.

The epitaph's insistence on the protection of the *titulus* is explicable by reference to Roman law, according to which the erection of the *titulus* established the tomb's religious status (*religio*) and right of legal protection.[81] But when the epitaph invokes 'the law', scholars are uncertain whether it is in reference to Jewish or Roman law.[82] The text proffers an

[78] G. Lacerenza, 'L'iscrizione di Claudia Aster Hierosolymitana', in L. Cagni (ed.), *Biblica et Semitica: studi in memoria di Francesco Vattioni* (Naples, 1999) 303–13 at 303–9 = *AE* 1999, 455 (here printed with minor modifications): [*Cl*]*audia Aster* [*H*]*ierosolymitana* [*ca*]*ptiua. curam egit* [*Ti*(*berius*)] *Claudius Aug*(*usti*) *libertus* [*Pro*]*culus. rogo uos fac*[*iatis*] *per leg*⌜*e*⌝*m ne quis* [*mi*]*hi titulum deiciat cu*[*ra*]*m agatis. uixit annis XXV*. For a detailed discussion of this inscription, I refer the reader to my 'Diaspora Judaism and the Law: The Torah, Language Choices and Diasporic Identities in Flavian Puteoli' (forthcoming).

[79] We cannot reconstruct with certainty the freedman's *cognomen*. Not only is 'Proculus' the commonest among names ending in *-culus* (*JIWE* I, pp. 44–45; cf. I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* [Helsinki, 1965] 30, 39–42, 176), but the *cognomen* is also common among imperial freedmen; cf. P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge, 1972) 89.

[80] *JIWE* I, p. 45, cf. p. 312, comparing *CIL* VIII 8499. *JIWE* II proffers two Latin (nos. 140, 278) and three Greek examples (nos. 91, 552, 596) from the Jewish catacombs of Rome.

[81] Cf. M. Kaser, 'Zum römischen Grabrecht', *ZRG* 95 (1978) 15–92 at 23–28.

[82] Cf. Lacerenza, 'Iscrizione di Claudia Aster', 311–12 for a summary of views.

unmistakeable clue, however, because Proculus juxtaposes the phrase 'by the law' with the verb *rogo* 'to ask (someone)'.[83] Frequent in Latin epitaphs, phraseology that is comparable to the one Proculus employs obligates the addressee by involvement of the divine realm. Usually through invocation of the traditional gods (often the *di superi inferique*), the epitaph's 'I' asks a third party neither to violate the tomb nor to connive at any such transgression. Moreover, among Latin epitaphs of this type one finds in the nominative not only the name of the deceased but also the name of the person who erected the stone, that is, the 'I' who utters an emotional appeal on behalf of the tomb's inviolability.[84]

But whereas appeals that invoke the gods are not infrequent in Latin epitaphs, it is exceedingly rare to find an address 'by the law'. In fact, the few epigraphic comparators at our disposal, although significantly post-dating Claudia Aster's epitaph, all originate from a Jewish milieu and hence suggest that the invocation of 'the law' was a peculiarity of Jewish funerary epigraphy.[85] Based on this evidence, it is most reasonable to assume that Proculus' plea for protection of a Jewish woman's *titulus* and funerary space, when he implicates 'the law', invokes the Mosaic Law enshrined in the (Greek) Pentateuch. In doing so, Proculus employs the Latin word *lex* as a straight translation of the Greek word νόμος, which was among diaspora Jews a commonly established reference to the Torah.[86] The material appearance of Claudia Aster's *titulus* possibly reinforces this hypothesis: the rather inconspicuous execution of the travertine stela is in line with other Jewish funerary representations of the period and perhaps reflects contemporary Jewish expectations regarding funerary expenses and display.[87]

We cannot determine beyond doubt whether Proculus was Jewish by birth or a proselyte, whether his affiliation with Judaism was restricted to

[83] Elsewhere (cf. above, n. 78) I show why this interpretation is preferable to one that reads 'fate secondo la legge' (Lacerenza, 'Iscrizione di Claudia Aster', 309).

[84] *CIL* VI 18281. For other examples, see *CIL* XIV 2535; M. L. Caldelli et al., '*Iura sepulcrorum* a Roma: consuntivi tematici ragionati', in S. Panciera (ed.), *Libitina e dintorni* (Rome, 2004) 309–427 at 404–11.

[85] Namely, *JIWE* I 145: *adiuro uos per licem* [sic] *quem Dominus dedit Iudeis*; *IJO* I Ach 51: ἐνεύχομαι ... τὰ[ς] δυνάμις τοῦ νόμου. Cf. M. Schwabe and B. Lifshits (eds.), *Beth She'arim. Volume 2: The Greek Inscriptions* (New Brunswick, 1974) 123–24 (no. 134); *IJO* II 179.

[86] For the Greek Pentateuch – that is, the 'Book of the Torah' – as 'the (Mosaic) Νόμος', both in the Septuagint and in Jewish authors, see M. Rösel, 'Von der Tora zum Nomos: Perspektiven der Forschung am griechischen Pentateuch', in S. Kreuzer (ed.), *Einleitung in die Septuaginta* (Gütersloh, 2016) 97–106 at 98–99. For the historical process of the Torah's canonisation, see J. W. Watts, 'The Political and Legal Uses of Scripture', in J. C. Paget and J. Schaper (eds.), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. I (Cambridge, 2013) 345–64 at 356–62.

[87] For which, see Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.205; D. Noy, 'Where Were the Jews of the Diaspora Buried?', in M. D. Goodman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, 1998) 75–89 at 82–83.

select practices and beliefs, or whether his own religious views stood apart from those of the Puteolan synagogue. But Proculus' invocation of the Mosaic Law to enlist the epitaph's implied addressees for the protection of the *titulus* and his urging that they accept their obligation towards the deceased all suggest that his target audience were the Jews of Puteoli.

The actual size of the Jewish community in Puteoli is ill understood. It must have comprised Roman citizens as well as voluntary and involuntary migrants without Roman citizenship while its members must have been of free, libertine and servile status. However, from the literary evidence there emerges a picture of interconnectedness, sustained by shared ethnic, religious and economic interests, between some pre-eminent members of the Puteolan Jewish community on the one hand and those of Jerusalem and Alexandria on the other.[88] This Puteolan Jewish community would have related Claudia Aster's fate to Jewish suffering in the revolt in Judaea but also their own suffering in the diaspora, which was believed to occur on behalf of the Mosaic Law. Josephus, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch all emphasise in the post-70 period the Jewish struggle on behalf of the Torah.[89] This law has its appropriate performative space in the local synagogue. There exists in fact a long-standing historiographical tradition to the effect that the destruction of the Second Temple accelerated the need for alternative foci of Jewish religious life in the diaspora – a need the synagogue fulfilled, with the Septuagint translation of the Mosaic Law as its centre of theological gravity. Be that as it may, because the 'Holy Law' occupied a crucial place in post-Second Temple Judaism, its perceived sacredness was reason enough for Proculus to invoke its power.[90]

[88] Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 185–90; Josephus, *Judaean War* 2.103–4; *Judaean Antiquities* 17.324–31, 18.159–61; *Life of Josephus* 13–16; Acts 18:13–14; discussed by G. Lacerenza, 'Fra Roma e Gerusalemme: l'immagine di Puteoli e dei Campi Flegrei in Filone Alessandrino e in Flavio Giuseppe', in L. Cirillo and G. Rinaldi (eds.), *Roma, la Campania e l'Oriente cristiano antico* (Naples, 2004) 97–128.

[89] Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.43, 191–93, 2.219, 232–35, 277, 283. 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 'Torah and the Deuteronomic Scheme in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: Variations on a Theme and Some Noteworthy Examples of Its Absence', in D. Sänger and M. Konradt (eds.), *Das Gesetz im frühen Judentum und im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen, 2006) 222–35 at 230–32.

[90] Νόμος ἅγιος: *JIWE* I 13 = *New Docs* X 25 (Ostia, second century). Cf. *JIWE* I 12: νόμοι ἅγιοι; Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 115: ἱεροὶ νόμοι. Other evidence for the perception of the Torah scroll as sacred in L. I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, 2005) 146–48. Cf. K. van der Toorn, 'The Iconic Book: Analogies between the Babylonian Cult of Images and the Veneration of the Torah', in K. van der Toorn (ed.), *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Leuven, 1997) 229–48 at 239–48 for the Torah as 'icon'.

While it is not uncommon to learn in an epitaph about the original residence of the deceased – in particular when they died away from home during military service or business travels or had permanently migrated from home for other reasons[91] – it is very rare indeed to encounter in an epitaph a reference to the cause of the deceased's enslavement through capture in war.[92] In fact, the qualifier *captiva*, 'captive' or 'prisoner of war', is exceedingly rare in Latin epigraphy, and neither *captivus* nor the more common *captus* is normally used in epigraphic texts to convey the perspective of those who were taken prisoners of war. However, the denigratory *IVDAEA CAPTA* coinage, ubiquitous in the monetary economy of Roman Italy over many years, provides a salient contemporary background for Proculus' employment of the word. Arguably in response to the ideological appropriation of the motif of *IVDAEA CAPTA* by the Flavians, the text of the epitaph reappropriates for diaspora Jews the theme of captivity and defiantly (albeit posthumously) reasserts the displaced captive's agency.

Proculus' reference to Claudia Aster's place of origin, Jerusalem, may be read as a reflection of the common practice in Jewish funerary epigraphy to commemorate the origin of the deceased.[93] Yet in the post-war period mention of Jerusalem adds considerable poignancy. It is telling that Josephus introduces himself in a strikingly similar vein, 'the son of Matthias, from Jerusalem, a priest' – and a sometime prisoner of war. Even after 70, Josephus can refer to the city as 'the most beautiful and very large', which 'we inhabit from most ancient times'. It is inescapable that we read the utterances of both Josephus and Proculus as gestures of defiance in the wake of the recent capture of the city of Jerusalem by Titus' army and the destruction of the Second Temple.[94] Proculus' decision to dwell on

[91] Nörr, '*Origo*', 527–29; H. Pavis D'Escurac, '*Origo* et résidence dans le monde du commerce sous le Haut-Empire', *Ktema* 13 (1988) 57–68 at 57–59; D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London, 2000) 5–6, 289–324.

[92] L. E. Tacoma, *Moving Romans: Migration to Rome in the Principate* (Oxford, 2016) 67 (n. 192) lists our epitaph and *CIL* XI 137, but it is more probable that the deceased of the latter epitaph was kidnapped (*captus*) and sold into slavery: M. Silver, 'Contractual Slavery in the Roman Economy', *AHB* 25 (2011) 73–132 at 113–14.

[93] For the practice in general, see R. Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period* (Leiden, 2005) 210–13, 486.

[94] Josephus, *Judaean War* 1.3 (cf. *Against Apion* 1.48); *Against Apion* 1.196 with Siegert, *Flavius Josephus* 1, 138. The importance of the city of Jerusalem for Josephus is also highlighted elsewhere, e.g. in *Life of Josephus* 7. The present tense in Josephus' depictions (especially in *Judaean Antiquities* and *Against Apion*) of the Second Temple as still functioning has been read to imply that the author nurtured hopes that the Temple might be rebuilt: J. W. van Henten, 'Josephus on the Temple from a Post-70 Perspective', in J. Schwartz and P. J. Tomson (eds.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: The Interbellum, 70–132 CE* (Leiden, 2018) 357–77 at 372–77.

such details must have been made with the intention to arouse in his target audience feelings of pity and grief as well as a sense of perseverance in the face of adversity, against the background of Roman triumphalist denigration of the Jewish enemy.

The law invoked by Proculus is the very same Torah which tens of thousands of spectators watched when it was paraded through the streets of Rome during the Flavian triumph of 71.[95] Like the other sacred utensils that were displayed as spoils to celebrate the Flavian conquest of an enemy city, the Mosaic Law was intimately connected to Jerusalem and the Second Temple (and was to become a potent symbol of Jewish diaspora culture and religion in the post-Second Temple period).[96] Greek and Latin authors, who portray Rome and the emperor as guarantors of law, regard the travesty of an alternative law code such as the Mosaic Law as criminal since it prevents rather than fosters peacefulness.[97] In Flavian Rome, the public parading of the Mosaic Law stood for the profound humiliation of Judaea and Judaism.[98]

The public humiliation of the symbols that the enemy holds dear is one aspect of cultural violence. But cultural violence also alters the moral compass. It legitimises acts of physical violence and renders structural violence acceptable. Cultural violence 'makes structural and direct violence look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong'.[99] Against this background, the epitaph's request for protection of the *titulus* from vandalism is only superficially similar to threats in traditional funerary epigraphy against miscreants lest they remove, efface, erase or otherwise inflict violent damage on the *titulus*.[100] I rather propose that we place Proculus' emotional urging of the Puteolan Jewish community to give protection to Claudia Aster's *titulus* within a context of direct violence sprung from

[95] Josephus, *Judaean War* 7.148–50, esp. p. 150: ὁ νόμος ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

[96] E.g. Josephus, *Judaean Antiquities* 14.227–28, 231, 234, 236, 240, 16.163–64. Emphasis on the Mosaic Law: e.g. *Judaean Antiquities* 14.227–64, 16.44, 163–66.

[97] Tacitus, *Histories* 5.4.1, with Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum*, 170; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.544, 14.100–104. For the law of the Jews, a *sceleratissima gens*, as a threat to Roman *leges*, see Seneca the Younger, *On Superstition* fr. 42 Haase = 73 Vottero.

[98] The hypothesis posited by H. Wendt, 'Entrusted with the Oracles of God: The Fate of the Judean Writings in Flavian Rome', in N. P. DesRosiers et al. (eds.), *A Most Reliable Witness* (Providence, 2015) 101–109, that the Torah scroll despoiled in the Flavian triumph was later deposited among the Sibylline Books in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, which would have lent it theological respectability as a divinatory text, finds no support in Josephus' text, which instead locates the Torah scroll, a despoiled exhibition piece, ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις 'in the imperial palaces' (*Judaean War* 7.162).

[99] Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, 196, 200.

[100] For examples, see Caldelli et al., '*Iura sepulcrorum* a Roma', 403.

cultural and structural violence in a climate of post-war anti-Judaism, which in some places demonstrably resulted in large-scale actions against local Jewish communities.[101] The threat of vandalism, involving the desecration of the burial space and the corpses of (religious) minorities, was real.[102] The very tenor of Claudia Aster's *titulus* entails that Proculus and his target audience expected, or had themselves previously experienced, acts of physical violence against the Jews of Puteoli, their property and their dead.

Such violence could be justified by the stereotypical accusation in non-Jewish narratives that the Jews were hateful of other peoples and 'hateful to the gods',[103] whereas at other times Jews were accused of 'atheism'.[104] To suggest that any such violence be viewed as an intermittent outbreak of politically motivated anger against members of the rebellious Judaean *gens* seems unnecessarily one-sided. Claudia Aster's epitaph evokes a social imaginary of diaspora Judaism which does not lack a sharply etched religious profile. Its religious alterity proffered one salient frame of reference to be engaged to those who perpetrated and those who suffered violence.

The Promotion of Particularism and the Permanence of Structural Violence

Symbolic violence is not difficult to identify in Roman cultural representations once we are prepared to read them as manifestations of violence. The permanence of structural violence registers at a different level of embeddedness in Roman society. By way of illustration, I note that contemporary economic pressures and the Flavian policy of fiscal exploitation of Rome's subjects have been cited as the reasons for Vespasian's

[101] E.g. in Syria: Josephus, *Judaean War* 2.398–99, 461–78 (and 479–80 for local exceptions), 7.41–62, 110–11, 364–68; Caesarea: 7.361–63; Egypt: 7.369.

[102] Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 37.2 (*CCSL* 1, pp. 147–48); *Ad Scapulam* 3.1 (*CSEL* 76, p. 11); Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.1.59–63 (*GCS* NF 6.1, pp. 424–26).

[103] Tacitus, *Histories* 5.3.1, 5.1 (apropos of the *Judaei*); *Annals* 15.44.4 (the *Christiani*); Diodorus Siculus 34/35.1–4; Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 353; J. G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen, 2004) 16–18, 161.

[104] Jewish ἀθεότης and ἀσέβεια: Apollonius Molon, *FGrH* 728 fr. 3a = Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.148, discussed by B. Bar-Kochva, *The Image of the Jews in Greek Literature: The Hellenistic Period* (Berkeley, 2010) 506–14; Diodorus Siculus 34/35.1.1; Cassius Dio 67.14.1–2; Porphyry, *Adversus Christianos* fr. 88D Becker; Julian, *Adversus Galilaeos* fr. 3.43a–b Masaracchia; E. Fascher, 'Der Vorwurf der Gottlosigkeit in der Auseinandersetzung bei Juden, Griechen und Christen', in O. Betz, M. Hengel and P. Schmidt (eds.), *Abraham, unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel* (Leiden, 1963) 78–105 at 101–102.

introduction of the Jewish tax in 70/71.[105] Yet these pressures, while all too real, fail to explain the date of introduction of the new tax, in the immediate aftermath of the capture of Jerusalem and the defeat of the Jewish rebels; the destruction of Jerusalem and the taxation of the Jews were still bracketed as being two sides of one coin in the Domitianic period.[106] Nor do economic factors sufficiently elucidate the heavy-handedness with which all members of Jewish households (male and female, free and enslaved, young and old, including those who had acquired Roman citizenship rights) were taxed across the empire[107] – a heavy-handedness the peculiarity of which becomes even more salient when considered against the fiscal exploitation of Rome's imperial subjects more generally. A particular embodiment of structural violence, the Jewish tax served to further economic and social inequality. We are perhaps able to observe how Jewish communities in Palestine and in the diaspora after 70 experienced economic and demographic decline, which must have been one result of the tax's financial burden and likewise must have conditioned the later violent upheavals involving Jewish populations in the Eastern Mediterranean.[108]

This example is but one specific manifestation of a more general system of violence against diasporic groups, foreigners and their deities. Understanding the relation between the specific and the systemic becomes crucial. Local Jewish diaspora life in the Roman Mediterranean is often characterised as falling somewhere in between the extremes of assimilation and antagonism, while Jewish communities were interacting all the same with their Graeco-Roman host societies.[109] However, modern narratives

[105] This interpretation is usually based on Suetonius, *Life of Vespasian* 16: H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, 1995) 31; Rutgers, 'Roman Policy towards the Jews', 72; Weikert, *Von Jerusalem zu Aelia Capitolina*, 127–30.

[106] Martial, *Epigrams* 7.55.

[107] See above, n. 74. For freedmen with Roman citizenship in Egypt paying the tax, see *CPJ* II 171, 179–80, 199; A. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen, 1985) 82–84.

[108] A. Kerkeslager, 'The Jews in Egypt and Cyrenaica, 66–*c.* 235', in S. T. Katz (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume Four: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge, 2006) 53–68 at 57–58; S. Honigman, 'The Ptolemaic and Roman Definitions of Social Categories and the Evolution of Judean Communal Identity in Egypt', in Y. Furstenberg (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World* (Leiden, 2016) 25–74 at 70–73. Numbers: *CPJ* I, pp. 81–82; E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden, 1976) 374–75.

[109] S. Schwartz, 'Ancient Jewish Social Relations', in M. Peachin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (Oxford, 2011) 551–66; J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh, 1996). Interaction is emphasised by L. V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (Leiden, 1995) 260–68; J. Wilker, '"... und machten diese gewissermaßen zu

rarely venture beyond anecdotal evidence when they postulate an interaction between Jews and non-Jews taking place on the 'middle ground', that space of accommodation on which different social actors met. Worse, when they focus their attention on interaction and accommodation, modern narratives reinforce the illusion of a by-and-large tolerant Roman society in which the dominant political order provides a valuable or at least legitimate place, by way of mutual negotiation, to the colonised, the oppressed, the subaltern. Subscribing to these narratives, we only continue the very discourse that was established by the hegemonic power.

A virtually identical taxonomical model to describe levels of social integration has been applied to other diasporic communities in the Roman world. And yet, the very vocabulary of integration, which Western modernity has developed in response to the phenomenon of mass migration since the nineteenth century, accentuates the individual's agency in the integration process. Owing to its assimilationist nature, the model's frame of reference is starkly dichotomous, suggesting that there is a voluntary choice between an individual's integration and rejection of the host society, its customs and values. Integration, however, is always contingent upon the host society's willingness to accommodate the migratory or diasporic experience, which oscillates between a home (whether real or imagined, actual or metaphorical) and life in the new locality. A prerequisite of successful assimilation is absence of structural violence.

Proculus' integration into the local society of Puteoli may be measurable by reference to the available evidence. He held Roman citizenship, even though his freed status may have been a constant reminder of his formerly servile status, one source of anti-Jewish feelings and a concern to the many freed Jews of Roman Italy.[110] He also possessed the means to purchase slaves and erect an epitaph, however modest, for his freedwoman. Proculus' affluence may be linked to his coerced attachment to the imperial order, as the emperor's slave and, later, freedman. He was perhaps in a strong position to provide a local trust network and act as middleman for co-religionists from the East. Puteoli's economic import – as a hub for the supply of Alexandrian grain and Eastern trade in a variety of commodities more generally – made the town a place of economic opportunity for many

einem Teil der ihren": Proselyten, Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten und der Normentransfer zwischen Juden und Nicht-Juden im 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr.', in G. F. Chiai et al. (eds.), *Athen, Rom, Jerusalem: Normentransfers in der antiken Welt* (Regensburg, 2012) 55–76.

[110] In general, D. A. Friedman, 'Josephus on the Servile Origins of the Jews', *JSJ* 45 (2014) 523–50.

an (imperial) freedman.[111] Likewise, Puteoli's function as a hub of the slave trade would have proffered ample opportunity to purchase prisoners of war arriving from the East.[112] Quite plausibly, Proculus ransomed Esther for the purpose of immediate manumission, thus fulfilling his obligation to ransom a co-religionist.[113]

Why did Proculus, despite his Roman citizen status and the social capital that accrued from his attachment to the imperial household, feel compelled to appeal for support to the Jewish community of Puteoli? Arguably, this network of co-religionists provided an alternative focus of sociability, compensating for a degree of discrimination, whether social, cultural or religious, in the host society. In that respect, the experience of other diasporic communities in Puteoli – Alexandrians, Berytans, Nabataeans, Tyrians and many more – would not have differed fundamentally from that of Proculus. Just as he had achieved a certain level of social integration by virtue of his status as an imperial freedman, these peregrine trade communities possessed a measure of socio-economic integration, which becomes visible by their prominence as middlemen and partners in Puteolan trade and commerce.[114]

As is well documented, their furthering of trade interests in the diaspora went hand in hand with the worship of their ancestral gods. The ritual maintenance of these deities in the diaspora created a strong focus of diasporic religious identification while also strengthening the credibility

[111] K. Jaschke, *Die Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des antiken Puteoli* (Rahden, 2010) 92–157. Grain and *annona*: L. Casson, 'The Role of the State in Rome's Grain Trade', in J. H. D'Arms and E. C. Kopff (eds.), *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome: Studies in Archaeology and History* (Rome, 1980) 21–33; E. Lo Cascio, 'Puteoli e l'*annona* di Roma', in F. Zevi (ed.), *Puteoli* (Naples, 1993) 51–60. Opportunities: M. Frederiksen, *Campania* (London, 1984) 324–30; J. H. D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples and Other Essays on Roman Campania* (Bari, 2003) 294–96. An imperial freedman, Ti. Claudius Potiscus, oversaw the production of bricks for the construction of the Puteolan amphitheatre, surely in the service of the emperor: P. R. C. Weaver, 'Imperial Slaves and Freedmen in the Brick Industry', *ZPE* 122 (1998) 238–46 at 241–42. Several documents in the 'archive' of the Sulpicii (*T.Sulpicii*) mention imperial freedmen or slaves, a further reflection of the financial clout they wielded on the Bay of Naples: M. Maiuro, *Res Caesaris: ricerche sulla proprietà imperiale nel principato* (Bari, 2013) 74–75, 78–79.

[112] Cf. D. Musti, 'Il commercio degli schiavi e del grano: il caso di Puteoli', in D'Arms and Kopff, *Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome*, 197–216.

[113] Cf. D. Noy and S. Sorek, 'Claudia Aster and Curtia Euodia: Two Jewish Women in Roman Italy', *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 5 (Winter 2007) 1–13 at 4, available online at https://wjudaism.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/wjudaism/article/view/3177. See further C. Hézser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford, 2005) 43–44, 314.

[114] C. Dubois, *Pouzzoles antique: histoire et topographie* (Paris, 1907) 64–117; Jaschke, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, 128–48, 221–24; T. T. Terpstra, *Trading Communities in the Roman World: a Micro-Economic and Institutional Perspective* (Leiden, 2013) 59–65, 70–92, and 'Roman Trade with the Far East: Evidence for Nabataean Middlemen in Puteoli', in F. de Romanis and M. Maiuro (eds.), *Across the Ocean: Nine Essays on Indo-Mediterranean Trade* (Leiden, 2015) 73–94.

of the community as a trust network for those of the same ethnic background. Epigraphy provides a *terminus ante quem* of 105 BCE for the establishment of a temple to Sarapis at Puteoli. The cult of the Nabataean deity Dusares was introduced probably as early as the mid-first century BCE. In 79 CE, the θεὸς ἅγιος from Sarepta (that is, Ba'al, his epithet a common one in the Phoenician tradition) arrived by sea from Tyre. Shortly thereafter the Tyrian community received from the decurions of Puteoli land for the worship of their god. An inscription of 116 attests the presence of immigrants from Berytus, worshippers of the Jupiter from Heliopolis.[115] Likewise, Jewish traders and businessmen introduced their god when they first established their presence in Puteoli long before the imperial period.

There is only weak evidence that these 'foreign' ancestral gods (πάτριοι θεοί or *patrii di*)[116] were acknowledged beyond their immediate diasporic networks. The degree of separation is highlighted by the fact that the centres of diasporic religious activity remained on the margins of Puteoli's civic life throughout the first century CE, clustering in the very *vici* and *pagi* along the coastal area where these diasporic trade communities conducted their economic activities.[117] The reliance on alternative social networks in the diaspora contributed to the emergence of what may be described as alternative topographies. It certainly created alternative spaces of sociability.[118]

Perhaps surprisingly, the figure of the emperor emerges as an alternative focus of religious and social embedding. This can be observed in the aforementioned dedication to Trajan by the *cultores* of Jupiter from Heliopolis. It is also apparent in the case of the members of the Tyrian trade diaspora, who repaired their station in 174 'for the sacred day of the

[115] Sarapis: *CIL* X 1781 = *RICIS* 504/401; cf. Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 98.2. Dusares: G. Lacerenza, 'Il dio Dusares a Puteoli', *Puteoli* 12–13 (1988–89) 119–49. Tyrians:*AE* 1988, 300, *SEG* XXXVI 923; cf. *IGR* I 419, 421 = *SEG* XXXVIII 1002, with P. Lombardi, 'I Tirii di Puteoli e il dio di Sarepta: la documentazione epigrafica da una sponda all'altra del Mediterraneo', *MediterrAnt* 14.1–2 (2011) 391–432 at 398–404. Berytans: *CIL* X 1634; cf. X 1579.

[116] Cf. A. Bendlin, 'Patrii Di', in *DNP* 9 (2000) 410–12.

[117] G. Camodeca, 'Comunità di peregrini a Puteoli di primi due secoli dell'impero', in M. G. Angeli Bertinelli and A. Donati (eds.), *Le vie della storia: migrazioni di popoli, viaggi di individui, circolazione di idee nel Mediterraneo antico* (Rome, 2006) 269–87; D. Steuernagel, '"Corporate Identity": Über Vereins-, Stadt- und Staatskulte im kaiserzeitlichen Puteoli', *MDAI(R)* 106 (1999) 149–87 at 161–65; Jaschke, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, 229, 231.

[118] For the notion of alternative topographies, see P.-A. Kreuz, 'Die Einheit der Stadt? "Alternative" Topographien römischer Städte', in T. L. Kienlin and A. Zimmermann (eds.), *Beyond Elites: Alternatives to Hierarchical Systems in Modelling Social Formations*, vol. 2 (Bonn, 2012) 533–44. On the notion of alternative spaces of sociability, cf. M. A. Vásquez, 'Studying Religion in Motion: A Networks Approach', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 20 (2008) 151–84 at 171.

Lord Emperor' and covered the expenses of an ox sacrifice relating to an imperial festival at Puteoli. The festival may perhaps be identified with the Eusebeia, which were instituted by Antoninus Pius in commemoration of Hadrian and attracted visitors from far beyond Italy. The festival provided an occasion to showcase the town's international stature. This religious occasion for once involved its alien residents as representatives of the wider Roman Mediterranean trade networks of which Puteoli was such an important hub. The earlier bilingual inscription of the Tyrians, however, uses Greek to detail the arrival of their 'holy god', whereas it switches to Latin (and to smaller letters) only to reference the decurions' grant of land and commemorate – by way of the traditional *pro salute* formula – the Emperor Domitian. The Jewish synagogue community at Ostia in the second century pursued a similar strategy: a building inscription commences with the Latin *pro salute* formula 'for the well-being of the ruling emperors', before the inscription switches to Greek, the synagogue community's liturgical language, for the actual text, which foregrounds the dedication of an ark for their Torah scrolls, the 'Holy Law'.[119] These examples have been interpreted as evidence for significant levels of social integration on the part of these local diasporic communities. However, their deliberate strategies of bilingual communication and the limits of civic participation suggest a different possibility: against a background of relative separation, there existed only a number of occasions and clearly confined fields of communication where one's interaction with the host society could reasonably be expected to pay dividends.

The coexistence of interaction and separation extended to the realms of life and death. Claudia Aster's epitaph was found together with another, unrelated non-Jewish funerary inscription,[120] which may prove that spatial segregation of Jewish and non-Jewish burial grounds in the territory of Puteoli did not exist in the period under consideration.[121] What epistemic conclusion should one draw from this evidence? Is it the case that spatial segregation or, alternatively, shared occupation of funerary spaces can be used as a criterion to elucidate more generally the levels of social separation or inclusion of the Jewish community responsible for Claudia Aster's burial? Epigraphy suggests a different scenario: even where one common

[119] Tyrians: *IGR* I 421 = *SEG* XXXVIII 1002; for the possible link between ox sacrifice and Eusebeia, see M. L. Caldelli, 'Eusebeia e dintorni: su alcune nuove iscrizioni puteolane', *Epigraphica* 67 (2005) 63–83 at 80. Ostia: *JIWE* I 13 = *New Docs* X 25.

[120] *CIL* X 2661 = EDR 108773.

[121] In general on this question, see Rutgers, *Jews in Late Ancient Rome*, 98–99; Noy, 'Where Were the Jews of the Diaspora Buried?', 78–85.

area was shared among different groups, the funerary space was nevertheless marked by spatial separation and social distinction. Tombs were often reserved for families, occupational and other associations, and groups defined by their religious alterity. At Ostia the Jewish community allotted a spot for burial to its gerusiarch. In the territory of Puteoli another Jewish gerusiarch constructed an enclosure to demarcate burial space from other tombs in the cemetery. And still at Puteoli the *corpus* of Berytan worshipers of Jupiter Heliopolitanus owned burial ground, access to which was granted only to those conforming with the association's 'law and agreement'. In life and death these networks were organised by ethnic, socio-economic and religious separation even when, or precisely because, they utilised spaces common to all.[122] Proculus' fear of vandalism of Claudia Aster's *titulus* must be seen against the background of spatial non-seclusion and socio-religious separation.

It is perhaps for precisely this reason that religion emerges as one crucial domain of social activity in the alternative spaces of sociability. This fact was readily acknowledged by all. When Roman officials, for instance, granted or confirmed privileges to local Jews in the Greek East, they did so on various occasions with explicit reference to the Mosaic Law and Jewish religious beliefs and practices. Confirming Augustus' earlier concessions to the Jews of Alexandria, the Emperor Claudius in 41 could admonish the Greek Alexandrians to respect the Jews' customary practices 'regarding their worship of the god'.[123] The expectation that one acknowledge the gods of other ethnic groups or polities, largely because religious custom needed to be followed, was also applied to their diaspora communities, just as it was customary for Roman officials abroad to acknowledge the gods of another city.

[122] *CIL* x 1579. Ostia: *JIWE* i 18. Puteoli: *JIWE* i 23, interpreted by D. Steuernagel, *Kult und Alltag in römischen Hafenstädten: Soziale Prozesse in archäologischer Perspektive* (Stuttgart, 2004) 249 as evidence of 'eine[s] speziellen Grabbezirk[s] für die Juden der Stadt'. Cf. Steuernagel, 'Corporate Identity', 160–61. Imperial-period associations of *cultores* of various deities marked off their own burial spaces: *CIL* iii 11485, ix 2654, ix 4673, x 5386, xi 4669, xi 8098; *I.Aquileia* i 684; *AE* 2007, 492. Cf. also *CIL* vi 10259 for an example of burial space reserved for members of one *collegium* (which sometimes explicitly included family members: *CIL* xi 6136).

[123] *CPJ* ii 153.85–88. Cf. Josephus, *Judaean Antiquities* 14.227: ἱερῶν ἕνεκα καὶ ἁγίων; release from military service of Judaeans with Roman citizenship δεισιδαιμονίας ἕνεκα: *Judaean Antiquities* 14.228, 231, 234, 236, 240. For discussion, see M. Ben Ze'ēv, *Jewish Rights in the Roman World: The Greek and Roman Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius* (Tübingen, 1998) 153, 178; M. Schuol, *Augustus und die Juden: Rechtsstellung und Interessenpolitik der kleinasiatischen Diaspora* (Frankfurt, 2007) 75–103. On the strictly local nature of these privileges, see T. Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (Leiden, 2000) 301–33.

This is not to suggest, however, that Rome showed any political interest in, or created a legal framework for, privileging all the gods who were dwelling in the diaspora. Analogous to other diasporic groups, Jews in Roman cities did not enjoy their special legal status as a result of membership in the local Jewish synagogue, nor did they receive any political privileges because of their Jewishness. In consequence, a more general acknowledgement of the deities that one worshipped abroad remained contingent upon the host society's approval; a question of custom, the matter stubbornly resisted regulation by any statute or principle of law. This is why Judaism never was a *religio licita*. We continue to be misled by this neologism, which Tertullian introduces to construe the quasi-legal status of religious freedom allegedly enjoyed by diaspora Jews. The phrase, a creation of Tertullian's juridical fictionalisation of the world, has no basis in Roman law or governance and should be avoided.[124] Continued use of an invented quasi-juridical category, which insinuates the possibility of religious integration in the Roman Mediterranean based on specific political accommodations or legal privileges, fundamentally misconstrues the structural imbalance created by the dominant political culture and must disregard the structural violence the latter employs.

That said, the Emperor Claudius' choice of language is illustrative of the acknowledgement that there existed a social space for religious alterity in the diaspora. The (self-)identification of Jewish diaspora communities was predicated in some measure upon their religion, which could be instrumentalised as a salient argument in the negotiation of privileges accorded to local Jewish communities. In other words, religion arguably justified the Jewish diaspora's status long before the destruction of the Second Temple. The later privileges granted to diaspora Judaism by Antoninus Pius or the Severans with explicit reference to the Jews' religious beliefs and practices do not require that we posit an historical moment – either in 70 or 96, as some have done – that brought about a fundamental change in the categorisation of Judaism as a group defined by religion and no longer (merely) by origin.[125]

[124] Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 21.1 (*CCSL* 1, pp. 122–23), with A. Bendlin, '"Eine Zusammenkunft um der *religio* willen ist erlaubt ..."? Zu den politischen und rechtlichen Konstruktionen von (religiöser) Vergemeinschaftung in der römischen Kaiserzeit', in H. G. Kippenberg and G.F. Schuppert (eds.), *Die verrechtlichte Religion: Der Öffentlichkeitsstatus von Religionsgemeinschaften* (Tübingen, 2005) 65–107 at 78–80.

[125] Modestinus, *Digesta* 48.8.11 (Antoninus Pius); Ulpian, *Digesta* 50.2.3.3; Modestinus, *Digesta* 27.1.15.6 (Severans), where the jurists use *religio* or *superstitio*; these passages are discussed by A. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit, 1987) 99–113 and interpreted quite differently by Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 449–50, 461. For 96/97, with Nerva's famous coin

It is sometimes held that the relative absence of an ancient Roman discourse about the socio-political integration of diasporic communities is explicable by Roman intolerance of others.[126] However, intolerance does not sufficiently explain why this discourse was largely non-existent. Why was Rome intolerant of foreigners in the first place? To answer that question, the Roman political order must be scrutinised diligently; we must realise, for instance, that Rome's rule was based in no small measure on the promotion of political, juridical or socio-ethnic particularism among its subject communities. Rome elided difference only when it was expedient to integrate the subjects of empire. As has often been documented, this happened usually by grant of citizenship to a variety of stakeholders, which included most prominently the members of municipal and other provincial elites. The persuasiveness of this strategy of legal integration depended in no small part on the successful minimising of ethnic, religious or cultural alterity of the one who needed to be assimilated to the imperial order.

The Roman fostering of particularism promoted the emergence of the diasporic tangent societies I sketched above. The phrase 'tangent society', introduced in polemical response to the established notion of 'parallel societies', foregrounds the moment when the respective trajectories of diasporic group and host society touch one another;[127] the metaphor implies that, in actual social and historical reality, these trajectories rarely touch, let alone come into meaningful contact with one another or penetrate the respective other's core. This tangential diaspora experience was deeply conditioned by the concrete political and social constraints determined by the Roman imperial order. The very nature of diasporic communities as ethnic, religious or ethno-religious networks – and in particular their function as domains of alternative sociability – was a structural consequence of the political power's fostering of diasporic particularism. The rise of tangent societies was one response to everyday structural violence.

message of that year (*RIC* II 56, 72, 82), as an alleged turning point, see only M. Goodman, 'Nerva, the Fiscus Judaicus and Jewish Identity', *JRS* 79 (1989) 40–44, and 'Diaspora Reactions', 33–34; M. Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (Tübingen, 2010) 67–84.

[126] *Pace* E. Baltrusch, '*Romanos mores inficere*: Zu den Problemen der jüdischen Gemeinde in Rom in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit', in P. Sänger (ed.), *Minderheiten und Migration in der griechisch-römischen Welt: Politische, rechtliche, religiöse und kulturelle Aspekte* (Paderborn, 2016) 47–58 at 57.

[127] A.-K. Nagel, 'Diesseits der Parallelgesellschaft: Religion und Migration in relationaler Perspektive', in A.-K. Nagel (ed.), *Diesseits der Parallelgesellschaft: Neuere Studien zu religiösen Migrantengemeinden in Deutschland* (Bielefeld, 2012) 11–35 at 12.

Gods as Foreigners

Neither Roman citizenship nor imperial freedman status sufficed for Proculus to overcome the socio-religious marginalisation of membership in the Jewish diaspora community. Rather, Claudia Aster's epitaph may be juxtaposed with descriptions of Jewish and Christian foreignness in the cities of the Roman empire. Almost contemporary with Proculus, the author of 1 Peter represents a dominant Jewish and Christian experience when he addresses the recipients of his letter as temporary residents (παρεπίδημοι) and foreigners (πάροικοι) in their local communities. His vocabulary may be filtered in no small measure through the language choices of the Greek Septuagint, but he engages in a contemporary discourse of social alienation as created by the diasporic experience. The metaphor of foreignness is utilised by the author regardless of what citizen status the Jews or Christians whom he was addressing may have acquired in their respective places of residence.[128] The examples of Proculus and the author of 1 Peter poignantly highlight the limits of integration of outsiders into the Roman world through the grant of citizenship or social promotion.

In Roman thought, foreignness remains an ambiguous concept. *Peregrini*, 'foreigners', were people 'on the move', according to one Roman etymology. Whether they arrived from somewhere or moved to some other place, foreigners were semantically associated with the world beyond the territory (*ager*) that was the destination of their movement in space. The problem was not that *peregrini* did not hold citizenship in some community or other. At stake was rather that their citizenship was not the same as that of the community to which they moved. Hence, foreigners remained at a relative disadvantage in the realm of commerce and trade. Even where Roman private law made practical concessions, for instance by loosening the rules of contract law or providing foreigners with access to the civil courts based on the legal fiction of Roman citizenship, other legal restrictions remained firmly in place. In the realm of religion, Roman rulings

[128] 1 Peter 2.11, with R. Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief* (Tübingen, 1992) 8–22; cf. J. Roldanus, 'Références patristiques au "chrétien-estranger" dans les trois premiers siècles', in *Lectures anciennes de la Bible* (Strasbourg, 1987) 27–52.

pertaining to dedications were applicable to neither foreign communities in provincial territory nor the local gods therein.[129]

The foreigner was caught between the requirements of trans-local mobility in the Roman Mediterranean at large and local valorisations of fixity.[130] Although the ancient world did not yet know the concept of 'immigrant', movement in space with the purpose of permanent residence in a new community was a concern to those on the move, but also to local communities or imperial administrators eager to monitor and, wherever possible, restrict movement. These concerns were articulated through the lens of permanence and sedentism, rather than through the perspective of mobility and movement, or by taking into account the views of those in transit.

From a juridical perspective, complementary to discourses about foreignness, the recent arrival (*advena*) was the opposite of the permanent resident (*incola*) and at a far distance from the citizen (*civis*).[131] Among free-born town dwellers in Latin-speaking municipalities, legal status established profound local inequality between citizens, permanent residents, temporary guests (*hospites*) and other arrivals (*adventores*). On rare occasions, acts of local civic or individual elite munificence could indeed extend to 'the whole town', for instance when a local donor in Praeneste included all four of the above status groups, together with their slaves, in his gift of permanent free access to a bath place.[132] However, in Roman society, where local competition for political, economic or any other privileges was determined in part by legal parameters, the exclusion of recent arrivals from benefactions was rather the norm (if we exclude from consideration the special category of *hospes*, 'guest').[133] Unsurprisingly, temporary visitors did not feature when citizens and permanent residents combined to honour local benefactors or when these two status groups

[129] *Peregrinus*: Varro, *On the Latin Language* 5.33; A. Walde and J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 4th ed., vol. 2 (Heidelberg, 1954) 286; M. P. Lavan, *Slaves to Rome: Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture* (Cambridge, 2013) 32–34. Legal restrictions and privileges: Gaius, *Institutes* 1.65–81, 119, 4.37; M. Kaser, '*Oportere* und Ius Civile', *ZRG* 83 (1966) 1–46 at 11–17; C. Ando, *Law, Language, and Empire in the Roman Tradition* (Philadelphia, 2011) 1–18. Dedications: Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.49–50.

[130] For the dichotomy, see N. Purcell, 'Fixity', in R. Schlesier and U. Zellmann (eds.), *Mobility and Travel in the Mediterranean from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Münster, 2004) 73–83.

[131] The *advena* (Greek ἄποικος) is contrasted with the *incola* (πάροικος) in Pomponius, *Digesta* 50.16.239.2–4.

[132] *CIL* XIV 2978–79; cf. *CIL* V 6668, IX 5074–75, *Suppl. It.* 18 (2000) 343–44 (no. 6167).

[133] Cf. *CIL* IX 2652; T. Mommsen, *Römische Forschungen*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1864) 321–90; J. Nicols, '*Hospitium* and Political Friendship in the Late Republic', in M. Peachin (ed.), *Aspects of Friendship in the Graeco-Roman World* (Portsmouth, RI, 2001) 99–108.

were included in prayers on behalf of the civic community. Nor were *advenae* among the recipients of such tangible benefactions as cash handouts, public banquets or the distribution of foodstuffs.[134] We simply cannot gauge xenophobia in Roman society or ascertain (the lack of) local violence against foreigners, therefore, if we focus our attention on the host community's permanent residents.[135]

Politico-legal categorisations did not apply solely to humans moving across space, however, but were transferable to migrant deities. *Peregrinae caerimoniae*, 'foreign ritual practices', are one rubric in Suetonius' *Life of Augustus*, where we learn that the *princeps* honoured only 'old and recommended practices' from that group, such as the rituals of Demeter of Eleusis of whose mysteries he was an initiate. Although not to be included in this rubric of external religious traditions, one immigrant to Rome was the Mater Magna, whose sanctuary on the Palatine hill the imperial family patronised. Many peregrine deities were held in contempt by the *princeps*: mention is made by Suetonius of the Egyptian Apis and the Jewish god.[136] An attempt is here made to rationalise the taxonomical indeterminacy of foreignness by distinguishing varying degrees of being foreign. With this taxonomy, Augustus inscribes himself into a traditional elite discourse: Cicero rejects all deities 'that are new or recent arrivals' and which people worship in separation, whereas he embraces those that the civic authorities have admitted.[137] The categories Cicero employs for the socio-political

[134] Dedications by *municipes* or *coloni* and *incolae*: *CIL* IX 730, 736, 738, X 411, XI 1944, 1946, 3121, 3127; *AE* 1975, 354, 1979, 246. Prayers: *CIL* III 1933. *Incolae* included among the recipients of benefactions: S. Mrozek, 'Quelques observations sur les *incolae* en Italie', *Epigraphica* 46 (1984) 17–21; J. F. Donahue, *The Roman Community at Table during the Principate*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, 2017) 102–103, 120–21, 140. Definitions: Plautus, *Aulularia* 406–407; *CIL* II^2 1022, ch. 126; II^2 1964, ch. 53; A. Chastagnol, '*Coloni et incolae*: note sur les différenciations sociales à l'intérieur des colonies romaines de peuplement dans les provinces de l'Occident (Ier siècle av. J.-C.–Ier siècle ap. J.-C.)', in A. Chastagnol et al. (eds.), *Splendidissima civitas: études d'histoire romaine en hommage à François Jacques* (Paris, 1996) 13–25; L. Gagliardi, *Mobilità e integrazione delle persone nei centri cittadini romani: aspetti giuridici*, vol. 1 (Milan, 2006).

[135] *Pace* G. D. Woolf, 'Strangers in the City', in F. Marco Simón, F. Pina Polo and J. Remesal Rodríguez (eds.), *Xenofobia y racismo en el mundo antiguo* (Barcelona, 2018) 127–36 at 132–35.

[136] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 93.1–2; similarly, *Historia Augusta*, Life of Hadrian 22.10: *sacra* ... *peregrina contempsit*. Cf. the employment of *externus*, 'external', to categorise foreign *caerimoniae* and *superstitiones* in Tacitus, *Annals* 11.15, 13.32; Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius* 36. For the Augustan context, see D. Wardle, *Suetonius, Life of Augustus* (Oxford, 2014) 506–509. Mater Magna and Augustus: *Res gestae* 19.1–2, where the goddess is the only migrant deity among the temple construction projects listed. As a corollary of the inherent dichotomy of Roman and foreign in the cult, peculiar foreign elements were censored by Augustan writers: J. A. Latham, '"Fabulous Clap-Trap": Roman Masculinity, the Cult of Magna Mater, and Literary Constructions of the Galli at Rome from the Late Republic to Late Antiquity', *JR* 92 (2012) 84–122 at 101–07.

[137] Cicero, *On the Laws* 2.19 (*separatim nemo habessit deos, neve novos neve advenas, nisi publice adscitos*). Degrees of foreignness: F. Geiger, 'Sacra', in *RE* I A2 (1920) 1656–64 at 1664; M. Van

purpose of exclusion of the religious other – novelty, the recent arrival, worship in separation – can legitimately be applied to an examination of how human and divine migrants, diaspora communities and foreigners more generally were conceptualised by the law, and how they may have been viewed or treated by other people.

In the late second century, Tertullian introduces a quasi-juridical metaphor to recognise Rome's 'freedom to adopt deities', which surely makes a learned reference to the Roman Republican introduction of a number of foreign deities under the juridical category of *peregrina sacra*. The latter included deities that Rome transferred from enemy territory in times of military conflict and others that it accepted under contingent conditions, such as Asclepius, Demeter and Cybele.[138] This category allowed for the application of the Roman concept of *sacrum*, which encompassed whatever the civic community consecrated to a deity and regulated the deity's ownership of temple, altar, sacred images and any money or object received. The category symbolically preserves the deity's 'foreign' character, even if her foreignness remains semantically underdetermined. At Rome, Asclepius, Demeter and Cybele could be envisioned to be 'worshipped in the custom of those from whom they were received'. Their integration into Rome's civic pantheon is demonstrable by the fact that they acquired Latinised or Roman names: as Aesculapius, Ceres and Mater Magna. Their Roman names and the property rights they now enjoyed transformed their respective status from foreigner to Roman.[139]

With reference to Cybele's transfer to Rome, Livy conceptualises her entry into the city in 204/203 BCE as an 'arrival by sea', which fairly represents the modalities of migration of gods and humans in the ancient

Doren, '*Peregrina sacra*: Offizielle Kultübertragungen im alten Rom', *Historia* 3 (1955) 488–97 at 488, not refuted by E. M. Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2010) 11–12 with n. 24.

[138] Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 2.8 (*CCSL* 1, pp. 53–54). *Peregrina sacra*: Festus (p. 268 Lindsay), with Van Doren, '*Peregrina sacra*'. The inclusion of all 'Fremdkulte' in this category (G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 2nd ed. [Munich, 1912] 348–79) is misguided. C. Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2008) 134, followed by Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome*, 9–10, 209, interprets this category as a creation on the part of late Republican and early imperial writers to impart some order to the variety of 'foreign' religious experiences in the city of Rome, but its origin in some juridical context seems more likely; see R. Reitzenstein, *Verrianische Forschungen* (Breslau, 1887) 55 for the suggestion that a 'Pontifikalwerk' was the ultimate source. *Sacrum*: Aelius Gallus in Festus (p. 424 Lindsay).

[139] I note without further comment the argument advanced by J. Scheid, 'Numa et Jupiter ou les dieux citoyens de Rome', *Archives des sciences sociales des religions* 59 (1985) 41–53 that the Romans conceived of their gods as fellow-citizens.

Mediterranean more generally. The Mater Magna's popularity in Rome and Puteoli is predicated in part on her privileged status, which we are invited to conceive in quasi-juridical terms. At stake, for both humans and gods, is socio-juridical integration, which becomes contingent upon the status of permanent residence (*domicilium*); the latter separates the *incola* from the *advena*, who remains in a state of movement. The 'holy god' from Sarepta likewise arrived in Puteoli by sea, but this divine *advena* remained on the margins of Puteolan society, like the religious practices and cultural traditions of his diasporic worshippers.[140] A similar fate befell the Jewish god and his local worshippers. When the Christian critics ridicule Roman polytheism by attacking its constructed taxonomies, their juxtaposition of binary pairs of gods – 'new and old, . . ., Roman and foreign, captive and adopted, those peculiar to Rome and those common to all'[141] – must be set against the reality of juridical, political and social discrimination against foreign deities and their worshippers. The idea that 'every *civitas* has its own way of worshipping the gods and we have ours', expressed by Cicero in the course of a spiteful diatribe against the Jews, encapsulates a Roman parochialism which, in its various ideological, political and juridical guises, was a manifestation of everyday structural violence in Roman society.[142]

Conclusion

Any survey of the views of Greek and Latin authors on ancient Judaism will highlight the equivocality of the sources. Opinions range broadly from rare instances of admiration for some aspects of Jewish culture and religion to the more common expression of outright hostility concerning many others. This range of views and the modern refusal to weigh them carefully may be two reasons for the belief that there existed common ground for accommodation and consensual cohabitation among Jews and non-Jews, despite hostility and intermittent physical violence. The mere juxtaposition of opinions, however, remains a lexicographic exercise of only limited epistemic value as long as one subscribes to the assumption that positive

[140] Livy 29.10.4–8: *Mater Idaea . . . advecta*. Mater Magna in Puteoli: Steuernagel, 'Corporate Identity', 165–66; M. L. Caldelli, 'Puteoli, Rione Terra: la fase post giulio-claudia in due nuove dediche', *MEFRA* 122 (2010) 181–90 at 187–90. 'Holy god' from Sarepta: *AE* 1988, 300; *SEG* xxxvi 923: κατέπλευσεν ἀ[πὸ] Τύρου; above, n. 115.

[141] Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 10.5 (*CCSL* 1, p. 106), *Ad nationes* 2.12.2 (*CCSL* 1, p. 60; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2.14 [*CCSL* 47, pp. 45–46], 3.12 [*CCSL* 47, pp. 73–74]) for lists intended to classify the large number and variety of the Graeco-Roman pantheon, both drawing possibly on a Varronian classification (cf. Varro, *Divine Antiquities* fr. 33 Agadh = 34 Cardauns).

[142] Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 69.

sentiments about ancient Judaism can establish a middle ground for interaction, neutralising the negative value judgements that predominate in the evidence.

This lexicographic approach is indebted in part to an intellectual tradition the persistent influence of which is chronicled in this chapter. All too often, religion in the first two centuries CE is interpreted within a framework that emphasises the coexistence of deities and cults – a veritable 'marketplace of religions' the malleability of which allowed for cohabitation. Yet the phenomenological essentialism underlying modern hypotheses about the respective affinity of monotheism and polytheism for violence has hindered acknowledgement that social actors across the Roman empire could relate violence to religion. Nor has the modern focus on physical violence, and the concomitant marginalisation of structural and cultural violence, helped.

This chapter has investigated the conditions under which social actors before later Antiquity appropriated the religious domain with their concerns as they legitimised or suffered violence. If there was a relative dearth of physical violence based upon religious motivations before the mid-third century, the persistence of cultural and the permanence of structural violence against the members of diaspora communities and their deities warns against the application of simple teleological taxonomies to Roman religion.

If one of the premises of this chapter is accepted, namely that the tangential existence of diasporic networks and their deities was fostered by religious considerations, it will become much harder to recover a middle ground on which consensual religious coexistence occurred. This is not primarily because of the perpetration of physical violence against the religious other, which was always intermittent. The problem at stake is rather that direct violence is a cataclysmic moment of leakage of underlying structural and cultural violence. In order to understand the systemic nature of violence in Roman society, we must eventually shift our attention from those who suffered violence to those who perpetrated it, and turn from the contingent moments of direct violence to the salience of cultural and the permanence of structural violence. Their relation to religion remains deeply contingent upon the motivations with which individual social actors appropriated the religious realm. With violence thus disaggregated from religion, we finally confront violence pure and simple and the society that condoned it.

CHAPTER 7

*Animal Sacrifice and the Roman Persecution of Christians (Second to Third Century)**

James B. Rives

Introduction

When is violence religious? Or, to put it more accurately, under what conditions can we appropriately characterise violence as religious? This is never an easy question to answer, as the chapters in this volume amply demonstrate. What qualifies as 'violence', although a question that is apparently straightforward enough, becomes more difficult to pin down the more closely one considers it, and several contributors to this volume are careful to distinguish physical violence, the sort of violence that probably springs to most people's minds when they hear the term, from cultural violence and structural violence.[1] What qualifies as 'religious' is even less obvious, especially in reference to the ancient Mediterranean world, from which several recent scholars have proposed we should exclude the term altogether.[2] In this chapter I do not intend to provide an answer to the question posed above. Although broadly framed questions of that sort are invaluable and even unavoidable heuristic devices, they do not lend themselves to precise answers. My purpose is instead to pose a more precise question, in hopes of reaching a more precise answer: what was the role of one particular 'religious' practice, that of animal sacrifice, in one particular example of 'violence', the Roman persecution of Christians? Although my answer to this more precise question will not serve as a proxy answer to the more broadly framed one, for reasons that I will discuss in my concluding remarks, it may at least contribute, in concert with the other contributions

* My thanks to Jitse Dijkstra and Christian Raschle for their invitation to participate in this project, and to the other participants for their comments on my chapter. I also owe thanks to Richard Westall, whose careful reading of the final version saved me from several errors.

[1] See especially the General Introduction, p. 3, and Bendlin, pp. 143–47, both this volume.

[2] Notably B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, 2013) and C. A. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York, 2016); see now also Mason, this volume, pp. 106–11, although note the counterarguments by Bendlin, this volume, pp. 139–41.

to this volume, to a greater appreciation of just how complex an issue that of 'religious violence' really is.

As a preliminary, I must say a bit more about the terms 'violence' and 'religious' in connection with my particular subjects. That the Roman persecution of Christians constituted a form of violence seems clear enough. It assuredly involved an element of direct, physical violence: a certain number of people were imprisoned, tortured and/or executed, even if that number is impossible to quantify. It also involved some degree of cultural violence, although its extent is again impossible to quantify, given that only a few, and usual indirect, examples survive.[3] Most importantly, it involved extensive and pervasive structural violence. However many Christians were actually imprisoned, tortured or executed, all Christian adherents must at all times have been acutely aware of their precarious situation within the larger social and political world of the Roman empire. Regardless of the precise legal basis of the persecution, a question that has been much debated by modern scholars, it was no doubt clear to everyone at the time that Christians as such had no legal standing, and that the threat of direct, physical violence might accordingly be realised whenever a disgruntled neighbour or a zealous Roman official chose to take action against them.[4] Whether we should characterise the persecution as 'religious' is more debatable, and many scholars have chosen to emphasise factors that most people would describe instead as social or political. Nevertheless, a recurring issue in the interactions between alleged Christians and Roman officials was the proper way to cultivate divine favour and avoid divine disfavour, an issue that many people would understand as religious.

One of the practices traditionally accepted as an effective means of cultivating divine favour was animal sacrifice. In considering this particular practice in the context of the violence of the persecution, it is important to keep in mind that for most of Graeco-Roman Antiquity, it was, despite the

[3] Most notably the lost treatise of the second-century philosopher Celsus, which partially survives in the voluminous rebuttal of Origen, *Contra Celsum*, and that of the late third-century philosopher Porphyry, the traces of which are much debated. The works of Christian apologists in the second and early third century imply a more extensive form of cultural violence.

[4] For my own survey of the debates, see J. B. Rives, 'The Persecution of Christians and Ideas of Community in the Roman Empire', in G. A. Cecconi and C. Gabrielli (eds.), *Politiche religiose nel mondo antico e tardoantico: poteri e indirizze, forme del controllo, idee e prassi di tolleranza* (Bari, 2011) 199–217. See also Bremmer's brief survey in Chapter 2, this volume, pp. 57–62. I refer to 'the' persecution simply as a convenient shorthand for what was a complex, varied and shifting set of interactions.

occasional critique, a largely non-controversial practice.[5] It had an important place in most of the cultic traditions within the Roman empire, including even the Judaean; as I have argued elsewhere, sacrificial practice provided some crucial common cultic ground between Judaeans and their Greek and Roman overlords.[6] How, then, did it come to play so central a role in the violence enacted between Roman authorities and Christians? What exactly was its role in those interactions, and how did it develop? It is in examining these questions that I hope to trace the process whereby a widely accepted and unremarkable religious practice came to play a central role in a form of violence that was both intensive and extensive.

I first examine the evidence for the role of animal sacrifice in the interactions of Roman authorities and Christians prior to the decree of Decius in the mid-third century CE, and conclude that it has a much lower profile than is perhaps generally assumed. Issues of date are crucially important in this section, and indeed in the chapter as a whole, because much of the relevant evidence comes from Christian accounts of martyrs. Since many of these were redacted long after the events they describe, they may well reflect the assumptions and obsessions of later periods, making it difficult to trace particular changes over time. I then turn to Decius' edict, and suggest that its emphasis on animal sacrifice invested that practice with a new kind of cultural significance. In the following section, I briefly outline the development of the Christian rejection of animal sacrifice, emphasising the extent to which this was a gradual and, at least initially, highly contingent process. Lastly, I examine Christian responses to Decius' demand that all inhabitants of the empire offer a sacrifice, contrasting the reactions of contemporary Christians, many of whom complied with apparently little sense that they were doing anything problematic, with the didactic efforts of martyrologists, who crafted accounts of heroic Christian recusants that presented animal sacrifice as a practice fundamentally incompatible with Christian identity. I conclude with a quick glance at developments in the early fourth century, and assess the extent to which we can identify Decius' decree as a turning point in the cultural and social meaning of animal sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean world.

[5] For brief surveys of ancient critiques, see J. D. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford, 2010), esp. pp. 55–83; J. B. Rives, 'The Theology of Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World', in J. W. Knust and Z. Várhelyi (eds.), *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2011) 187–202; D. Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (Oxford, 2012) 31–64.

[6] J. B. Rives, 'Animal Sacrifice and Political Identity in Rome and Judaea', in P. J. Tomson and J. Schwartz (eds.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History* (Leiden, 2014) 105–25.

The Role of Animal Sacrifice in Trials of Christians Prior to Decius

We know relatively little about the place of animal sacrifice in interactions between Roman authorities and Christians in the period prior to the decree of Decius in 249/50. The evidence is scattered and meagre, frequently difficult to date and even more difficult to assess. I survey it here in three groups, in order of increasing uncertainty about date. The first group includes two texts, one by Pliny and one by Justin Martyr, that we can date more or less precisely. The second consists of two documents incorporated by Eusebius into his *Church History*, which provides a fairly reliable *terminus ante quem*. The third comprises accounts of martyrs transmitted as discrete texts. With these we are in very uncertain territory, since the only grounds on which we can date them are the external evidence provided by the manuscripts, too late to be useful for my purposes here, or references within the texts, the significance of which is debatable. That said, I have chosen three accounts of which the composition is usually dated to the late second and early third century CE.[7] Although all these texts raise a number of important issues, I will restrict my comments to the points that are essential to my argument.

Pride of place in the first group goes to the famous letter of Pliny to Trajan.[8] This text provides by far the most valuable evidence for our topic, not only because it can be dated with some precision, but also because it is the only document that provides the Roman authorities' point of view. It was written sometime in the period 110–12 CE, perhaps in the autumn or winter of 110 CE, and thus at the very start of the period under consideration here.[9] In describing the procedures that he followed in handling people who had been anonymously accused of being Christians, Pliny distinguishes various groups. Those who denied that they were or ever had been Christians he led in invoking the gods, making an offering of incense and wine to an image of the emperor along with those of the gods, and cursing Christ, 'none of them things that actual Christians, they say, can be forced to do'.[10] Those who admitted that they had at one time been Christian but claimed not to be so any longer also had to venerate the images and curse Christ.[11] Those who admitted to being Christians were

[7] Translations throughout are my own, except where otherwise noted.
[8] Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.96.
[9] A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford, 1966) 81, 529, 691.
[10] Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.96.5. [11] Ibid., 10.96.6.

punished. I emphasise here just two key points. First, as has often been noted, Pliny requests the accused to engage in these actions simply as confirmation of their denials: they must demonstrate by their deeds the claims they have made in words. His account provides no evidence that there otherwise existed any positive requirement for people to perform these or any other rituals. Second, he makes no reference whatsoever to animal sacrifice. The offering that he specifies is instead the simpler, much cheaper and undoubtedly much more widespread offering of wine and incense.

The second text that can be dated with some confidence is the so-called *Second Apology* of Justin Martyr, which includes a brief account of the trial of two Christians, Ptolemaeus and Lucius, that took place in Rome before the urban prefect Q. Lollius Urbicus. Since Urbicus held office in the period 146–60 CE and the text itself dates probably to 154 CE, the trial itself must have taken place sometime within a decade of Justin's writing.[12] Like Pliny, Justin makes no reference to animal sacrifice, or indeed to any ritual practices whatsoever; instead, he presents the point at issue as that of claims to Christian identity.[13] We of course cannot know what actually took place in the trial, since Justin's account reflects his own interests and priorities, and possibly those of his source as well. At best it provides only negative evidence.

Judging by the first group of texts, then, we might conclude that, in the period prior to Decius, animal sacrifice had no place whatsoever in interactions between Roman authorities and Christians. The second group of texts does little to alter that impression. These are texts that have come down to us through a complex process of filtering, of which we can discern at least some traces. The date at which Eusebius wrote his *Church History* has been much discussed, but it was almost certainly sometime in the period between 313 and 325.[14] Although Eusebius does not always quote his sources accurately and sometimes summarises and truncates them in ways that may misrepresent them, there is little reason to think that he forged documents or deliberately altered them.[15] That of course does not

[12] Urbicus: *PIR*² L 327. Date of text: D. Minns and P. Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* (Oxford, 2009) 44.

[13] Justin Martyr, *Apologia* 2.2.7, 10, 12 (*SC* 507, pp. 322, 324).

[14] T. D. Barnes, 'The Editions of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History', *GRBS* 21 (1980) 191–201, argues for a series of editions extending from *c.* 295 to *c.* 325 CE. Many now follow R. W. Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *JThS* 48 (1997) 471–504, in concluding that it was not begun until after the end of the persecution in 313. Most recently, A. Johnson, *Eusebius* (London, 2014) 20–21, 104–12, has argued for a single edition dating to 324.

[15] For examples of inaccuracies in quotations, see H. J. Lawlor, *Eusebiana* (Oxford, 1912) 23–26; for distortion of sources, T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA, 1981) 14–41.

mean that he would have rejected or even detected pre-existing inauthentic documents. As a result, although Eusebius provides a *terminus ante quem*, we must still assess the documents that he preserves on their own merits.

Those that concern us here are two letters: one from the Christian community in Smyrna to that in Philomelion, describing the trial and death of their Bishop Polycarp, an account that has also been transmitted independently of Eusebius, and one from the Christians in the Gallic cities of Vienna and Lugdunum to those in Asia and Phrygia describing a recent persecution.[16] The second adds nothing to our inquiry, since the author, like Justin in his account of Ptolemaeus and Lucius, makes no reference to any ritual practices whatsoever. His concern is almost exclusively with his Christian heroes' fortitude in enduring torture and proclaiming their identity, and he thus provides little information of any sort about the conduct of the trials; for the purposes of our present inquiry, his evidence too is purely negative. The account of Polycarp, in contrast, is much more interesting. Eusebius reports that he found it in a collection of martyr accounts from Smyrna, which was presumably the ultimate source of the independently preserved version.[17] The date of the events is uncertain. Eusebius himself dates them to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, but most modern scholars prefer an earlier date of *c.* 157 CE.[18] The date of the text is likewise uncertain. Traditionally, most scholars assume that the letter was written shortly after the events it describes, with some later additions. Recent scholars, notably Candida Moss, have advanced strong arguments against this assumption, pointing out numerous anachronisms and arguing instead for a date of composition sometime in the first half of the third century.[19] For my purposes, it is enough to accept that the text generally

Arguments for Eusebius' reliability: T. Heyne, 'The Devious Eusebius? An Evaluation of the *Ecclesiastical History* and Its Critics', in J. Baun et al. (eds.), *Studia Patristica XLVI* (Leuven, 2010) 325–31.

[16] Polycarp: Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.15.2–45 (*GCS* NF 6.1, pp. 336–52); Lugdunum: ibid., 5.1.3–3.3 (*GCS* NF 6.1, pp. 402–32).

[17] Ibid., 4.15.46 (*GCS* NF 6.1, p. 352).

[18] Ibid., 4.15.1 (*GCS* NF 6.1, p. 334). For the date of 157 CE, see most recently T. D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen, 2010) 368–73. O. Zwierlein, *Die Urfassungen der Martyria Polycarpi et Pionii und das Corpus Polycarpianum*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 2014) 1–36 argues that the evidence supporting this earlier date was not in the original text, and instead proposes a date early in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, *c.* 161–67/68.

[19] C. R. Moss, 'On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity', *Early Christianity* 4 (2010) 539–74. Zwierlein, *Urfassungen* 1, 12, and 2, 108–17, dates the archetype to 260–80 and posits a complex textual history: the extant Old Armenian version represents the version that Eusebius included in the first edition of his *Historia ecclesiastica* (which he dates to *c.* 295 CE, following Barnes, 'Editions'); in the wake of Diocletian's persecution, a redactor produced a new version, which Eusebius used in his second edition (*c.* 313/

reflects the outlook of Christians prior to the reign of Decius, and from this perspective its evidence is intriguing. It represents the Roman authorities, especially the governor, as urging Christians to engage in a range of cultic practices similar to those that Pliny employed: to swear and sacrifice (the verb is ἐπιθύειν), to declare that Caesar is lord and to sacrifice (ἐπιθύειν again), to swear by the *tyche* of the emperor, to swear and to curse Christ, to swear by the emperor's *tyche*.[20] The account of Polycarp's martyrdom is thus the first of those surveyed here to include any reference to sacrifice. At the same time, the author mentions sacrifice as just one of several practices, and does not give it any special prominence. Moreover, the term used, ἐπιθύειν, is ambiguous: although it most likely was intended to denote animal sacrifice, it can also refer to other types of offering, such as the incense and wine specified by Pliny.[21]

We turn finally to my third group of texts, independently transmitted martyr accounts. The three that I consider here all describe events that purportedly took place in the mid-second to early third century CE. Scholars have generally assumed that all three were composed shortly after or even partly during the events that they describe, although recent work has called that assumption into question. In terms of historical setting, the earliest is the acts of Justin Martyr and his companions, whose trial before the urban prefect Q. Junius Rusticus occurred sometime in the period 163–68 CE.[22] These acts survive in three different recensions, conventionally known as A, B and C, which are progressively more elaborate. Scholars agree that C is a late reworking (fourth century CE at the earliest), but that both A and B probably derive in part from the original court records.[23] In the form in which they have been transmitted, however, neither can date

14, Barnes again) and which was further adapted *c.* 400 CE by the redactor of the independently preserved version. Although I am not in a position to assess these arguments, I find this multiplication of hypotheses inherently unattractive.

[20] *Passio Polycarpi* 4, 8.2, 9.1, 9.3 and 10.1, respectively (pp. 4, 8, 10 Musurillo). Of these passages, Zwierlein, *Urfassungen* I, 6–11, includes only 8.2 and 9.3 in his reconstructed *Urfassung*, which does not affect my argument here.

[21] LSJ s.v. ἐπιθύειν II, gives as one meaning 'burn incense', but of the passages it cites in support, only Diodorus of Sicily 18.16.1 refers unambiguously to burning incense; 1 Kings 12:33 (LXX) is in fact a clear reference to animal sacrifice.

[22] Rusticus: *PIR*² J 814; cf. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 21 (n. 48), who argues that he entered office as early as 160 CE.

[23] G. Lazzatti, *Gli sviluppi della letteratura sui martiri nei primi quattro secoli* (Turin, 1956) 119–27, seems to have established the practice of distinguishing the three recensions as A, B and C, followed by H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972). G. A. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii* (Philadelphia, 1988) 117–18, concludes that although both A and B have been edited throughout, they are likely to derive from court records; Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 63–64, provides further arguments that A is based on a contemporary court record.

to much before the late third century, since both begin by locating the events 'in the time of the lawless decrees of idolatry', suggesting that when the redactors were at work that time was over.[24] In A, the interactions between Rusticus and Justin and his companions (2–4) centre around their identification as Christians, and there is no reference to any cult acts; consequently, it comes as something of a surprise that in pronouncing his sentence Rusticus refers to 'those unwilling to sacrifice to the gods' (the verb is ἐπιθύειν).[25] The account of the interrogation in B (2–4) is much the same as in A, with some elaboration of Christian doctrine, but at its conclusion the prefect tries to persuade Justin and the others to sacrifice. The subsequent reference to their unwillingness to sacrifice (θύειν) accordingly makes more sense in B than in A, and we might suspect that B is in this respect closer to the original source than A.[26]

Next in order of date are the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, whose trial the text itself dates precisely to 17 July 180. Most scholars have regarded the text as deriving quite closely from a transcript of the actual trial and thus as a contemporary account; more recently, some have argued that it has been significantly reworked and may date as late as the fourth century CE.[27] The text represents the governor as trying to persuade the Christians to swear by the *genius* of the emperor and as condemning them for their persistence in living according to the Christian *ritus* and their refusal to return to Roman *mores*,[28] but it makes no mention of sacrifice at all.

The last of these texts is perhaps the best-known martyr account from the Roman world, the *Passio Perpetuae*, which describes the arrest, trial and execution of a young Christian convert and her companions in the first few months of the year 203 CE. The *Passio* as we have it is a composite, the redaction of which is generally dated no later than 211 CE; it survives in both a Latin version (generally agreed to be the original) and a Greek translation. The account of the trial comes from the part of the text that purports to be the diary of Perpetua herself, a claim that, although

[24] *Acta Justini* (A) 1 (p. 42 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 43, slightly modified); cf. (B) 1 (p. 46 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 47, slightly modified): 'In the time of the lawless defenders of idolatry, impious decrees were posted against the pious Christians'.

[25] *Acta Justini* (A) 5.6 (p. 46 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 47, slightly modified).

[26] *Acta Justini* (B) 5.8 (p. 52 Musurillo).

[27] The year is indicated by the consulship of C. Bruttius Praesens: *PIR*² B 165. For the text as contemporary, see e.g. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 65; cf. p. 356. Reworking of the text: C. R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, 2012) 125–29.

[28] *Passio martyrum Scillitanorum* 5 and 14 (pp. 86, 88 Musurillo).

occasionally challenged, is widely accepted.[29] According to Perpetua, she and her companions were suddenly taken from prison to the forum, where they were interrogated by the procurator Hilarianus. When it was Perpetua's turn, her father appeared and urged her to sacrifice (the verb is *supplicare* in the Latin version, ἐπιθύειν in the Greek); Hilarianus picked up on this, encouraging her to spare her father and perform the sacrifice (Latin *sacrum facere*, Greek ἐπιθύειν).[30] When Perpetua refused, he asked her if she was a Christian, and she responded in the affirmative. Hilarianus then condemned them all to the beasts.

Since these seven accounts of Christian trials are the only ones that have any likelihood of dating to the period before Decius, the preceding survey represents pretty much the sum of what we know about the role of animal sacrifice in those trials. Although meagre, we can nevertheless draw from it two useful conclusions. First, animal sacrifice does not seem to have had any particular role in the trials of Christians. We may be certain that Pliny did not introduce it into his proceedings. Given the precision with which he describes his actions, it is clear that the cult acts he employed were limited to invoking the gods, offering wine and incense, and cursing Christ. The Christian texts do not allow for this degree of certainty, since we cannot be sure of what their authors did and did not know about the details of the proceedings or what they chose to pass over as unimportant to their purposes. That said, we may note that neither Justin Martyr nor the scribe for the Christian community in Vienna refers to any cult acts at all; that the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* refers only to swearing by the emperor's *genius*; that Perpetua and the redactors of recensions A and B of the *Acts of Justin* refer generically to sacrifices; and that the account of Polycarp's martyrdom refers in passing to more or less the same range of cult acts that we find in Pliny's letter, with the substitution of the general term 'sacrifice' for Pliny's specific offering of incense and wine. Whether the terms for sacrifice employed in these texts were meant to refer specifically to animal sacrifice is far from clear: on the whole it is likely enough, but the terms themselves are generic and not specific.[31] There is thus very

[29] For a recent and concise introduction to these issues, see J. N. Bremmer and M. Formisano, 'Perpetua's Passions: A Brief Introduction', in J. N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (eds.), *Perpetua's Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Oxford, 2012) 1–13 at 2–7; at greater length, T. J. Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (Oxford, 2012) 60–99.

[30] *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 6.2–3 (p. 26 Farrell and Williams).

[31] For ἐπιθύειν, see above, n. 21. The Latin phrase *sacrum facere* means simply 'to perform a sacred rite' and could be applied to a wide range of practices; see the brief discussion of F. Prescendi, *Décrire et comprendre le sacrifice: les réflexions des Romains sur leur propre religion à partir de la littérature antiquaire* (Stuttgart, 2007) 25–26.

little reason to think that animal sacrifice played any significant role in the trials of Christians prior to Decius.

This is much as we would expect. Although it has long been taken for granted that animal sacrifice was the central act of the Graeco-Roman cultic tradition, recent scholars have demonstrated that some earlier work tended to exaggerate its uniqueness and have argued cogently that we may more properly regard it as simply one practice among many.[32] As I have argued elsewhere, animal sacrifice did have several distinctive features: it required greater financial resources than many other kinds of offerings, it provided people with the opportunity to preside in person over an elaborate ritual and it had an inherent potential for commensality. Together, these features meant that animal sacrifice constituted a particularly efficient instrument for shaping socio-political hierarchies.[33] Apart from this distinctive socio-political valence, however, there is little to suggest that ancient Greeks and Romans regarded animal sacrifice *per se* as more efficacious than any other type of offering. Indeed, in terms of most people's experience, simpler and more inexpensive offerings (libations, garlands, little cakes) must have played a vastly more important role in structuring their day-to-day relationship with the divine.

The second conclusion is that, quite apart from whatever role it did or did not play in actual trials, animal sacrifice seems to have held no distinctive significance for the Christians who composed and transmitted these accounts of martyrdoms. Those who mention sacrifice at all do so only in passing and, as we have seen, using neutral and generic terms. It is worth noting that when these authors do refer to cult acts, their role in the trial is very different from that in Pliny's account: whereas Pliny asked only those who had already denied being Christian to engage in these practices, as a means of confirming their denial, the martyr accounts represent the presiding authorities as attempting to persuade people to engage in a cult act even before they ask whether they are Christians. This motif is clearest and most fully elaborated in the account of Polycarp,[34] but also occurs in the accounts of Justin, the Scillitan martyrs and Perpetua. Whether this

[32] See esp. F. S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods* (Oxford, 2013); C. E. Schultz, 'Roman Sacrifice, Inside Out', *JRS* 106 (2016) 58–76; for a useful discussion of recent trends, see D. Ullucci, 'Sacrifice in the Ancient Mediterranean: Recent Current Research', *Currents in Biblical Research* 13 (2015) 388–439.

[33] I develop this analysis at greater length in J. B. Rives, 'Animal Sacrifice and Euergetism in the Hellenistic and Roman Polis', *Religion in the Roman Empire* 5 (2019) 83–102.

[34] *Passio Polycarpi* 9–10 (pp. 8, 10 Musurillo).

represents a shift in actual practice or simply reflects Christian perceptions is impossible to say. In either case, the authors consistently show no concern with animal sacrifice in particular. It is worthwhile highlighting the low, almost non-existent profile of animal sacrifice in the interactions between Roman authorities and Christians prior to Decius, since it suggests that Decius' insistence on this particular cult act may have been much more unusual than it is generally thought to have been.

Animal Sacrifice in the Decree of Decius

Although we do not have any direct evidence for the text of Decius' decree, enough indirect evidence survives that we can be reasonably certain of its main provisions. Most of what we know about the decree derives from surviving copies of the certificates that were produced as part of the process, of which forty-seven examples on papyrus are now known from Egypt, supplemented by the writings of contemporary Christians, Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage and Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria.[35] This evidence makes it clear enough that the decree insisted specifically on animal sacrifice.[36] The wording of the certificates on this point is very specific. I quote one example from the village of Theadelphia:

[35] Certificates: J. R. Knipfing, 'The Libelli of the Decian Persecution', *HTR* 16 (1923) 345–90, provides texts and translations of the forty-one available at the time, to which add *PSI* VII 78, *SB* VI 9084, *P.Oxy.* XLI 2990 and LVIII 3929, *P.Lips.* II 152, and most recently P.Luther 4, for which see W. G. Claytor, 'A Decian *Libellus* at Luther College (Iowa)', *Tyche* 30 (2015) 13–18 (my thanks to Sarah Bond for calling this text to my attention). The wording of the certificates is, with minor variations, the same in all known examples, and so must reflect the official instructions for implementing the decree in Egypt; see further P. Schubert, 'On the Form and Content of the Certificates of Pagan Sacrifice', *JRS* 106 (2016) 172–98. Christian writers: Cyprian, *Epistulae* 5–43 (*CCSL* 3B, pp. 27–210) and *De lapsis* (*CCSL* 3, pp. 221–42); Dionysius as quoted in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.40–44 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 596–626). For general discussions, see G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 1 (New York, 1984) 21–39; R. Selinger, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Decius: Anatomie einer Christenverfolgung* (Frankfurt, 1994); J. B. Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *JRS* 89 (1999) 135–54; R. Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt, 2004); Bremmer, this volume, pp. 60–61.

[36] Cyprian, *Epistulae* 55.2.1 (*CCSL* 3B, p. 257), refers to a group of lapsed Christians whom he characterises as *turificati*, 'those who have offered incense', in distinction with *sacrificati*, 'those who have offered sacrifice' (55.12.1, 17.3 [*CCSL* 3B, pp. 269, 276]), which suggests that some presiding officials allowed select individuals or groups to offer incense in place of an animal sacrifice; see further A. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge, 2010) 182, 215–16. This, however, was apparently an *ad hoc* arrangement, and since we hear of it only in this one letter it is impossible to know how widespread it was; see G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 3 (New York, 1986) 167.

> To the commission chosen to superintend the sacrifices (τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν θυσιῶν ᾑρημένοις). From Aurelia Ammonarion of the village of Theadelphia. I and my children, Aurelius Didymus, Aurelius Nouphius and Aurelius Taas, have always and without interruption sacrificed and shown piety to the gods (ἀεὶ μὲν θύουσα καὶ εὐσεβοῦσα τοῖς θεοῖς . . . διατετελέκαμεν), and now in your presence in accordance with the edict's decree we have poured libations, and made sacrifice (ἐθυσάμεν), and partaken of the sacred victims (τῶν ἱερείων ἐγευσάμεθα). I request you to certify this for me below. Farewell.[37]

Although the edict evidently also required people to pour a libation, the emphasis is clearly on animal sacrifice. It is also worth noting that the certificates make no reference whatsoever to the occasion or the purpose of the sacrifice, which suggests that the primary concern of the decree was with the bare performance of the libation and sacrifice. Contemporary Christian writers corroborate this focus on animal sacrifice, since they regularly elaborate to great rhetorical effect on the foul impurity of the hands and lips of those who engaged in a sacrifice.[38]

Why was Decius so concerned with animal sacrifice in particular? Since our evidence for his reign is meagre in the extreme and we have none whatsoever for the motivations behind the decree, we can only speculate.[39] Although there is general agreement that he was motivated in large part by a desire to regain the favour of the gods in a time of stress, that does not

[37] *SB* I 4436; trans. Knipfing, 'Libelli', 368.

[38] E.g. the Roman confessors writing to Cyprian in the late summer of 250 CE: 'those hands contaminated by heinous sacrifice must be washed clean by good works, those unfortunate lips, defiled by accursed food, must be purified by expressions of genuine repentance' (Cyprian, *Epistulae* 31.7.1 [*CCSL* 3B, p. 159]; trans. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 2 [New York, 1984] 38; for the date, see p. 133); for further examples, see Cyprian, *De lapsis* 2, 10, 15, 28 (*CCSL* 3, pp. 221–22, 226, 228–29, 236–37). See also Cyprian's description of people going to the altars to sacrifice (*De lapsis* 8 [*CCSL* 3, p. 225]; cf. Dionysius in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.41.11–13 [*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 604]) and his anecdotes about Christians who had eaten something impure from the altar (*De lapsis* 24–26 [*CCSL* 3, pp. 234–36]).

[39] P. McKechnie, 'Roman Law and the Laws of the Medes and Persians: Decius' and Valerian's Persecutions of Christianity', in P. McKechnie (ed.), *Thinking Like a Lawyer: Essays on Legal History and General History for John Crook on His Eightieth Birthday* (Leiden, 2002) 253–69 at 266, proposes as the immediate incentive the contemporary Persian campaign against non-Zoroastrians within their territory, led by the priest Kartir; the decree's aim 'was to obtain divine favour, or least counteract any advantage the Persians might be obtaining from their gods as a result of Kartir's programme'. B. Bleckmann, 'Zu Motiven der Christenverfolgung des Decius', in K.-P. Johne, T. Gerhardt and U. Hardmann (eds.), *Deleto paene imperio Romano: Transformationsprozesse des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert und ihre Rezeption in der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2006) 57–71, argues that the decree constituted Decius' attempt to create loyalty among his subjects after the bloody civil war that brought him to power. Brent, *Cyprian*, 178, sees it as a response to the perceived cosmic malaise of the times; Decius' goal was 'to obtain the *pax deorum* following the collapse of the world into its *senectus* in order to set right a nature at variance with itself'.

account for his insistence on animal sacrifice in particular. There must have been additional reasons for his emphasis on that specific act. I would tentatively suggest that he was in some way attempting to address a contemporary shift in patterns of worship. Jaś Elsner has cogently argued that over the course of the third century CE there was a significant decline in the visual imagery of animal sacrifice and a concomitant increase in the imagery of vegetal offerings.[40] Although the reasons for this shift in imagery are by no means clear, it seems likely that it in some way reflects a shift in the cultural and social significance of animal sacrifice and possibly even a decline in its actual practice. Decius may well have been aware of this move away from animal sacrifice, and have associated it with the increase in social and political instability that he had experienced in the course of his life. Born probably around the year 190 CE, he was old enough to remember the reign of Septimius Severus, an era that in retrospect must have seemed a golden age of strength, stability and prosperity. By the time he became emperor, however, things were different, and he was faced with complex problems of social change, political instability and external military threats for which there was no easy solution. It is possible that animal sacrifice served for him as a proxy focus of concern, not merely symbolic of but in some way constitutive of these broader socio-political problems; he may well have had some notion that by systematically enforcing the practice of animal sacrifice he was doing something to reinforce the fabric of the empire.

As I have already observed, however, the reasons for Decius' insistence on animal sacrifice must remain unknown. Moreover, they are in my view relatively unimportant. More important is the mere fact of his insistence and its long-term effects. In a paper published some twenty years ago, I argued that Decius' decree, by applying the apparatus of the Roman imperial bureaucracy to the oversight of a religious ritual, created a system in which 'every inhabitant of the Roman Empire had a specific and immediate religious obligation to the imperial government'.[41] The fact that this obligation consisted in offering an animal sacrifice meant that this particular cult act acquired new and distinctive significance as a marker of Roman imperial identity. Decius thereby established the framework for the insistence on animal sacrifice that characterises the persecution of Christians in the early fourth century CE. At the same time, it initiated among

[40] J. Elsner, 'Sacrifice in Late Roman Art', in C. A. Faraone and F. S. Naiden (eds.), *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers* (Cambridge, 2012) 120–63.

[41] Rives, 'Decree of Decius', 152.

Christians a process that endowed animal sacrifice with increasing prominence as a practice incompatible with Christian identity. In order to provide the broader context for that process, I will first briefly survey earlier Christian attitudes to animal sacrifice.

The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice

One of the most distinctive features of the early Christian tradition is that Christians seem to have rejected the practice of animal sacrifice regardless of its form or context. This is such a familiar observation that we tend to forget how unusual such a rejection was, given that Christianity began within Judaean tradition.[42] It was certainly in accord with earlier Judaean tradition that Christians refused to offer sacrifices to deities other than the one whom they regarded as the one true and living God. But since the practice of offering animal sacrifices to their own God was absolutely central to Judaean tradition, it was by no means inevitable that Christians would come to reject those sacrifices as well. Initially, in fact, they do not seem to have done so. Prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE, there is no convincing evidence for the rejection of Judaean sacrificial practice among Christ-followers.[43] There were indeed some practical limitations on participation in animal sacrifice. Since by the late Second Temple period animal sacrifice could take place only in the Jerusalem Temple, Judaeans who lived outside its environs had to travel in order to participate in it, and we may reasonably assume that the further away they lived the more rarely they participated. The same practical limitations applied to gentile Christ-followers, who were further limited by the cultic requirements that no gentile could penetrate beyond the outermost courtyard of the Temple. They could thus participate in Judaean animal sacrifice only financially, by providing the funds for a victim.[44] Yet more important in the long term was the development of practices and beliefs that potentially, although by no means inevitably, provided the framework for a system that left no conceptual space for

[42] A point rightly stressed by M.-Z. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200* (Oxford, 2008).

[43] See J. Klawans, 'Interpreting the Last Supper: Sacrifice, Spiritualization, and Anti-Sacrifice', *NTS* 48 (2002) 1–17, esp. pp. 9–14; Ulluci, *Christian Rejection*, 74–78; P. Fredriksen, 'How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism', in P. J. Tomson and J. Schwartz (eds.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History* (Leiden, 2014) 17–51 at 28–31.

[44] For Judaean participation in animal sacrifice, see Rives, 'Animal Sacrifice and Political Identity', 113; for gentile participation, p. 120.

animal sacrifice: the establishment of the Eucharist as a central cultic act and the spread of sacrificial interpretations of Jesus' death.[45] We are so used to the idea of these traditions standing in a mutually exclusive relationship with the practice of animal sacrifice that it requires some effort to imagine that things might have developed otherwise. Yet given how closely Jesus' death was associated with the Passover, which centred on the sacrifice of a lamb and the associated ritual meal, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suppose that early Christians might have come to memorialise Jesus' sacrifice with souvlaki instead of bread and wine.

It was the historical accident of the Temple's destruction and the concomitant end of Judaean sacrificial practice that transformed the potential for a non-sacrificial cultic system into a reality, and the practical retreat from animal sacrifice into an ideological rejection. This was a gradual and varied process. As Daniel Ulluci has demonstrated, Christian rejection of sacrifice was in the first two centuries or so not a single unified position: 'there is not even a logical progression or stemma of argument types that can be drawn out'. Instead, 'early Christian positions on sacrifice . . . represent individual authors making individual arguments in specific contexts for specific reasons'.[46] I will briefly note two of these. The first occurs in the anonymous treatise that traditionally goes by the name of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Its author develops a highly elaborate interpretation of Christ as simultaneously the High Priest, offering the annual sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the people, and the sacrificial victim; Christ's self-offering was the perfect sacrifice that superseded the annual sacrifice of earlier times. The underlying logic here is that although animal sacrifice once served a purpose, namely, to remove sins, it did so only inadequately and has now been superseded by another type of sacrifice that has achieved that goal more effectively.[47] The second is made by Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. According to Justin, God made animal sacrifice part of his worship not because he desired it, but in response to the incident of the Golden Calf recounted in Exodus: seeing how his people were so inclined to idolatry, God accommodated himself to them

[45] Eucharist: see briefly P. F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2002) 118–43; A. B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids, 2014) 19–64. Sacrificial interpretations: e.g. F. M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MA, 1979); C. A. Eberhart, *Kultmetaphorik und Christologie: Opfer- und Sühneterminologie im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen, 2013).

[46] Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 65–118, with quotations from p. 117.

[47] Hebrews 9–10, cf. 7:27, 13:11–12; see further Ulluci, *Christian Rejection*, 90–95.

and commanded them to offer sacrifices to himself, so that they would not again lapse into idolatry.[48] Implicit in Justin's argument here is the assumption that animal sacrifice is inherently an idolatrous practice and should by rights never have had any place in the worship of the one true God. Rabbinic tradition, by contrast, for the most part continued to regard the practice of animal sacrifice as a central part of the tradition, even if it could be enacted only textually.[49] It was only Christians who came to reject it entirely, excluding it from their Judaean inheritance and identifying it more and more completely with the Graeco-Roman religious tradition.

There is a further dimension to the Christian rejection of animal sacrifice. Beginning in the mid-second century CE, Christian thinkers combined elements of Graeco-Roman philosophy and late Second Temple Judaean legend into an elaborate interpretation of the Graeco-Roman religious tradition as the worship of demons.[50] Justin Martyr provides the earliest surviving example. To understand the reason why Christians are oppressed for proclaiming the true God, he explains, we must turn to cosmic history. When God established the natural order of the world, he entrusted it to angels who were appointed to the governance of men and women. But the angels disobeyed him, were captivated by the love of women and begat demons. They then enslaved the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, partly by fears and punishments, and 'partly through instruction about sacrifices (θύματα) and incense (θυμιάματα) and libations (σπονδαί) – things they have needed ever since they were enslaved by passions and desires'.[51] Poets and mythologists, not knowing that it was the rebel angels and demons who did these things, ascribed them to the divine.[52]

[48] Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 19.5–6, 22 (pp. 230, 234–40 Bobichon); see further Ulluci, *Christian Rejection*, 101–104.

[49] See e.g. the Mishnaic tractates *Zebahim* and *Tamid*.

[50] The main examples are Justin Martyr, *Apologia* 2.4 (*SC* 507, pp. 328–30), Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 23–27 (pp. 54–66 Schoedel, pp. 74–89 Marcovich), Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 22–23 (*CCSL* 1, pp. 128–33), and Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 26–27 (pp. 24–27 Kytzler), perhaps anticipated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:14–21. On conceptions of *daimones* in Graeco-Roman and Christian Antiquity, see in general C. D. G. Müller, 'Geister (Dämonen)', in *RAC* IX (1976) cols. 546–797, and F. E. Brenk, 'In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period', in *ANRW* II.16.3 (1986) 2068–2145.

[51] Justin Martyr, *Apologia* 2.4.4 (*SC* 507, p. 330); trans. Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 283.

[52] Justin Martyr, *Apologia* 2.4 (*SC* 507, pp. 328–30); see further A. Y. Reed, 'The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr', *JECS* 12 (2004) 141–71.

Animal sacrifice tended to have a prominent place in these Christian accounts of the Graeco-Roman religious tradition, largely because it afforded an excellent opportunity for dramatic rhetorical effects. So, for example, Athenagoras describes demons as beings who 'engross themselves in the blood from the sacrificial victims and lick all around them'; Tertullian affirms that demons are unclean spirits, 'as ought to be understood even from their food: blood and smoke and the stinking pyres of cattle'; and Minucius Felix refers to demons being 'crammed with the aroma of the altar or sacrificed cattle'.[53] Underlying all these descriptions is the theory that demons have physical bodies, if highly attenuated ones, and so require for their sustenance the smoke and aromas produced by animal sacrifice. It was on this basis that Origen could equate offering animal sacrifice with aiding and abetting outlaws:

> If men who give sustenance to robbers, murderers, and barbarian enemies of the Great King are punished as criminals against the state, how much more will they be punished justly who through offering sacrifice proffer sustenance to the minions of evil and thus hold them in the atmosphere of the earth! . . . In my opinion, when there is question of crimes committed by these demons operating against men, they who sustain them by sacrificing to them will be held no less responsible than the demons themselves that do the crimes. For the demons and they that have kept them on earth, where they could not exist without the exhalations and nourishment considered vital to their bodies, work as one in doing evil to mankind.[54]

Although these writers often highlight the specific practice of animal sacrifice, they nevertheless do not sharply distinguish it from other Graeco-Roman cultic practices. Justin, in the passage cited above, includes incense and libations along with sacrifices. Similarly, Origen explains that 'these demons, in order to be able to exist in the heavy atmosphere that encircles the earth, must have the nourishment of exhalations and, consequently, are always on the lookout for the savour of burnt sacrifices, blood, and incense'.[55] For Justin and Origen, animal sacrifice is not the only cult act that helps provide demons with their necessary sustenance.

[53] Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 26.1 (p. 64 Schoedel, pp. 85–86 Marcovich); trans. W. R. Schoedel, *Athenagoras, Legatio and De Resurrectione* (Oxford, 1972) 65, modified; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 23.14 (*CCSL* 1, p. 132); Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 27.2 (p. 27 Kytzler).

[54] Origen, *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 45 (*GCS* 2, pp. 41–42); trans. J. J. O'Meara, *Origen: Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom* (New York, 1954) 188. On the materiality of *daimones* and their need for the nourishment of offerings, see G. A. Smith, 'How Thin Is a Demon?', *JECS* 16 (2008) 479–512; T. Proctor, *Rulers of the Air: Demonic Bodies and the Making of the Ancient Christian Cosmos* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Chapel Hill, 2017).

[55] Origen, *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 45 (*GCS* 2, p. 41); trans. O'Meara, *Origen*, 188.

By the middle of the third century CE, then, Christian writers and leaders had developed a varied and robust set of arguments that provided intellectual justification for the rejection of animal sacrifice. To the extent that it had ever played a legitimate role in the worship of the one true God, it had now been superseded. Ejected from the Judaean tradition that Christians claimed as their inheritance, animal sacrifice increasingly came to be associated primarily or even solely with idolatry, an index of everything that Christians rejected and reinterpreted as a practice that wicked demons, the enemies of God and humanity alike, had instituted for their own sustenance. Yet despite these intellectual developments, animal sacrifice had not yet assumed the entirely distinctive place in the Christian imagination that it would later come to acquire. That came about only in the period after Decius' decree and in part, I will suggest, because of it.

Christian Responses to the Decree of Decius

Given the texts that demonstrate that Christian opposition to animal sacrifice was apparently both long-standing and intense, it comes as a surprise to realise that, when Decius issued his edict mandating that all inhabitants of the empire publicly participate in an animal sacrifice, a significant number of Christians chose to comply. That much is clear from the accounts of contemporary Christian leaders whose writings have survived. Although Cyprian left Carthage and went into hiding shortly after the decree was promulgated, he was aware from an early date that a considerable percentage of the Christian laity had complied.[56] The numbers were so great that the question of what to do with 'the lapsed', as he termed Christians who had in any way complied with the decree, became a burning issue even before he had returned to Carthage and resumed his place in the community. In the treatise that he composed at that time on the problem of 'the lapsed', he writes:

> At the first threatening words of the Enemy, an all too large number of the brethren betrayed their faith; they were not felled by the violence of the persecution, but fell of their own free will ... Many were defeated before the battle was joined, they collapsed without any encounter, thus even depriving themselves of the pleas that they had sacrificed to the idols (*sacrificare idolis*) against their will.[57]

[56] Cyprian, *Epistulae* 13.1, 14.1.1 (*CCSL* 3B, pp. 71–72, 79).
[57] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 7–8 (*CCSL* 3, pp. 224–25); trans. M. Bévenot, *Cyprian, De Lapsis and De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate* (Oxford, 1971) 11, 13.

In letters written many months later he indicates that among those who had offered sacrifice were even a few bishops.[58] Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, provides a similar description of the situation in his city: 'of many of the more eminent persons, some came forward immediately through fear, others in public positions were compelled to do so by their business, and others were dragged by those around them'.[59]

Why did so many Christians obey Decius' decree and offer sacrifice? Cyprian and Dionysius cite various worldly considerations, and take it for granted that no Christian could have sacrificed without knowing full well that he or she was doing something terrible. They both expatiate to excellent rhetorical effect on the emotions that such people must have experienced as they performed their sacrifice: 'But surely . . . even if a man approached of his own accord to commit himself to this grim crime, did not his step falter, his eyes cloud, did not his heart quake, his arms go limp? Surely his blood ran cold, his tongue clove to his palate, his speech failed him?'[60] The fact that some Christians devised strategies to avoid the choice between full compliance and direct refusal indicates that many of them did regard animal sacrifice as something they should avoid: some like Cyprian went into hiding, and some who had the means either compelled others to sacrifice on their behalf or bribed officials to provide them with certificates without their performing a sacrifice.[61] Nevertheless, we should be wary of accepting at face value these two bishops' insistence that all true Christians regarded any involvement in animal sacrifice as a grievous sin. The rhetorical effectiveness that makes their accounts so vivid is in itself a reminder that they were concerned not with providing a neutral assessment but with pursuing their own goals.

There are in fact good reasons to suppose that at least some people who identified as Christian did not regard it as such a very serious thing to offer a public sacrifice. As Éric Rebillard has pointed out, the fact that many of those who offered sacrifice clearly expected to maintain their membership in the Christian community suggests that they did not regard their act as a denial of their Christian adherence.[62] Origen, writing in the same treatise

[58] Specifically, the African bishops Jovinus and Maximus (Cyprian, *Epistulae* 59.10.2–3 [*CCSL* 3C, pp. 353–54]) and Fortunatianus (65.1–3 [*CCSL* 3C, pp. 426–28]); for the dates of the letters, see Clarke, *Letters of St. Cyprian* 3, 235–36, 316–17.

[59] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.41.11 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 604); trans. J. E. L. Oulton, Loeb.

[60] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 8 (*CCSL* 3, p. 225); trans. Bévenot, *Cyprian, De Lapsis*, 13.

[61] Brent, *Cyprian*, 220–22, 240–47.

[62] É. Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, NY, 2012) 51.

that I cite above, indicates that some Christians did not regard the practice of animal sacrifice with the gravity that it deserved. What prompted his comparison of those who offer sacrifice with those who aid robbers and murderers was precisely the fact that 'some people give no thought to the question of demons [and] attach no importance to the matter of sacrifice'.[63] That there were Christians who held such views seems clear enough, but since they did not explain their views in any form that has survived, we can only guess at their thinking.[64] For my purposes, what is important is that the decree made it clear for the first time that not everyone who identified as a Christian necessarily subscribed to the views on animal sacrifice that I surveyed above. This was a problem that later Christian leaders, I would suggest, took steps to rectify.

Although the evidence is again meagre and difficult to date, a consideration of two martyr acts that in some form must date back to the immediately post-Decian period, those of Pionius and Carpus, suggest a heightened attention to animal sacrifice as something fundamentally antithetical to Christian identity. Both acts were known to Eusebius, whose testimony thus provides a *terminus ante quem*, although his references to them are so brief that it is impossible to determine whether he knew them in the form in which they are now extant. Moreover, his testimony creates a problem of dating, since Eusebius associates both of them with the martyrdom of Polycarp, which he dates to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, whereas the extant acts date them to the persecution of Decius. Most scholars now agree that Eusebius was mistaken, and that in both cases the events, to the extent that they are historical at all, did take place in the time of Decius.[65]

[63] Origen, *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 45 (*GCS* 2, p. 41); trans. O'Meara, *Origen*, 188.

[64] Brent, *Cyprian*, 225–28, 239–40, argues that some Christians complied with Decius' decree because they had not fully divested themselves from Their pagan background and so truly believed that the ritual was needed to save the empire. Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities*, 1–5, 50–4, proposes instead that, because people have multiple identities that they activate in different times and in different contexts, many would have seen no inherent incompatibility between participation in a civic ritual decreed by the emperor and their personal identity as Christians.

[65] Eusebius' language suggests that he found all three acts in the same document (*Historia ecclesiastica* 4.15.46–48 [*GCS* NF 6.1, pp. 352–54]). For the date of Polycarp, see above, n. 18. The extant acts of Pionius date the events to the reign of Decius in two separate passages, *Passio Pionii* 2.1, 23 (pp. 136, 164, 166 Musurillo); the former is accepted by Zwierlein, *Urfassungen* 1, 68, 82, as part of the original text. For discussion, see L. Robert, *Le martyre de Pionios, prêtre de Smyrne*, mis au point et complété par G. W. Bowersock et C. P. Jones (Washington, 1994) 2–7, and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 74–76, both of whom see the extant acts as dating largely to the time of the events. Zwierlein, *Urfassungen* 1, 78, by contrast, dates the extant Greek version of the acts to *c.* 400 CE. The *Acts of Carpus* survive in multiple recensions, of which scholars agree the two earliest are

There is wide agreement that the author or redactor of the acts of Pionius was influenced by the account of Polycarp, which he seems to some extent to have taken as a model.[66] Yet the similarities between the two texts make it all the more obvious how much larger animal sacrifice looms in the account of Pionius. According to the author, Pionius knew in advance that he and his companions would be arrested and thus put chains around their necks, so that everyone would know that they, unlike others, would not be led to eat defiled food (μιαροφαγῆσαι) but were ready to go to prison instead (2.4).[67] The *neokoros* Polemon then comes with his men to haul them off to sacrifice (ἐπιθύειν) and eat defiled food, citing the emperor's edict to sacrifice to the gods (3.1). He leads them off to the *agora*, where there occurs a series of exchanges in which demands and refusals to sacrifice are a virtual leitmotif (4.1, 4.13, 7.2, 7.6, 8.2, 8.4, 10.5–6). After a stay in prison, Polemon returns to them and again urges them to offer sacrifice, this time citing the example of Euktemon, a local Christian leader (presumably the bishop), who had already done so (15.2). He drags them off to the temple, where Euktemon is still in the act of worshipping idols; the author later explains that Euktemon had brought a lamb to the temple, where he had roasted and eaten some of it, and had sworn by the emperor's *tyche* and the city's patron deities that he was not a Christian (18.13–14). Once more there is a series of exchanges, in which Pionius and his companions steadfastly refuse to offer sacrifice (16.1–2, 18.3–6). Sacrifice is again a leitmotif in the narrative's final exchange, between Pionius and the proconsul, which concludes with the proconsul condemning Pionius to be burnt alive (19–20). The author concludes with a brief account of his death and an exhortation to the audience: 'his face shone again – wonderful grace – so that the Christians were all the more

A (in Greek) and B (in Latin), thought to derive from a common source; A provides no date, B dates the events to the reign of Decius. For arguments in favour of a Decian date and the historical reliability of the common source of A and B, see C. P. Jones, 'Notes on the *Acts of Carpus* and Some Related Martyr Acts', in M. Cassia et al. (eds.), *Pignora amicitiae: scritti di storia antica e di storiografia offerti a Mario Mazza*, vol. 1 (Rome, 2012) 259–68 at 262–68.

[66] Scholars in fact conventionally refer to the redactor of the independently transmitted account of Polycarp's martyrdom as Pseudo-Pionius because he concludes the text with a first-person statement (*Passio Polycarpi* 22.3 [p. 18 Musurillo]) in which he identifies himself as Pionius and claims to have sought out and copied the text after seeing Polycarp in a vision. For some of the other connections between the two texts, see briefly Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 73; for a complex and detailed analysis of their relationship, see Zwierlein, *Urfassungen* 2, *passim*, esp. pp. 25–30, 68–72, 267–396.

[67] Cf. *Passio Pionii* 3.5, 6.3 (pp. 139, 145 Musurillo).

confirmed in the faith, and the faithless ones returned terrified and with fearful conscience'.[68]

In contrast to the account of Polycarp, in which sacrifice is rarely mentioned and never emphasised, the account of Pionius dwells almost obsessively on the act of sacrifice, to the exclusion even of the libations that seem to have featured in Decius' actual decree. Moreover, whereas the brief and non-specific references to sacrifice in the account of Polycarp could well refer to some type of offering other than animal sacrifice, the account of Pionius, with its repeated references to eating defiled food, leaves no doubt that it is specifically animal sacrifice that is at issue. Lastly, the author pointedly and repeatedly represents animal sacrifice and Christian identity as mutually exclusive alternatives. When Polemon orders Pionius to sacrifice, Pionius responds simply 'I am a Christian' (8.2). He makes the same response to another official who asks him why he refuses to sacrifice (16.1–2). When garlands are put upon their heads, they tear them off and keep shouting that they are Christians, so that the public slave who is standing nearby with a platter of sacrificial meat (εἰδωλόθυτον) does not dare to approach them, but simply eats the meat himself (18.4–6). The import of all this for the intended audience is clear: true Christians do not engage in animal sacrifice and cannot do so without betraying their Christian identity.

The *Acts of Carpus* presents the same lesson in an even more forceful and didactic form.[69] The account begins with Carpus and his companion Papylus brought before the Roman proconsul. The proconsul asks Carpus his name, and Carpus responds by stating that his 'first and most significant name is "Christian," but if you are asking about my name in the world, it is Carpus'.[70] The proconsul then reminds him of the imperial decrees requiring people to honour the gods and advises him to sacrifice (θύειν). Carpus repeats that he is a Christian, declares that he honours

[68] Ibid., 22.4 (p. 164 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 165, slightly modified). It is worth noting that Zwierlein, *Urfassungen* I, 68–77, 82–114 includes many of the key passages that feature animal sacrifice (2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 15.2, 19.1–3, 20.2–3 [pp. 136, 138, 156, 160, 162 Musurillo]) in his reconstruction of the original acts, which he dates to 260–80 CE (*Urfassungen* I, 12, 78; 2, 108).

[69] I follow the Greek recension A: *Acta Carpi* (A) (pp. 22–28 Musurillo). My discussion here summarises the analysis that I develop at greater length in J. B. Rives, 'Cult Practice, Social Power, and Religious Identity: The Case of Animal Sacrifice', in S. Alkier and H. Leppin (eds.), *Juden, Christen, Heiden? Religiöse Inklusion und Exklusion in Kleinasien bis Decius* (Tübingen, 2018) 71–88 at 79–85.

[70] *Acta Carpi* (A) 3 (p. 22 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 23, slightly modified).

Christ, and states that he does not sacrifice to these sorts of idols (5). He then continues with a brief disquisition in order to explain himself further: 'it is impossible for me to sacrifice to the spurious appearances of *daimones*; for those who sacrifice to them are similar to them'.[71] Just as those who worship the true God become like him, 'so too those who worship these are assimilated to the vanity of the *daimones* and are destroyed with them in Gehenna'.[72] And indeed it is just that they should be destroyed along with the Devil, who because of his innate wickedness has deceived humankind (8). After a further brief exchange in which the proconsul repeatedly presses him to sacrifice, Carpus responds with a second disquisition about the relationship between God, *daimones* and humans. After one final refusal to sacrifice, the proconsul has him tortured and turns his attention to Papylus.

As in the account of Pionius, the *Acts of Carpus* present the conflict between the martyr and the proconsul in terms of a non-negotiable mutual exclusivity between Christian identity and the practice of sacrifice: Carpus' Christian identity is what precludes his obeying the proconsul's orders. But whereas the redactor of the account of Pionius simply presents this incompatibility as a given, the redactor of this text has his protagonist provide a detailed explanation for it. Although the various ideas that he puts in the mouth of Carpus do not all easily cohere with one another, they nevertheless constitute a complex interlocking set of beliefs that justify his refusal to sacrifice. He derives them from the by-now long-standing Christian discourse on animal sacrifice, discussed above, that interpreted it as an act providing necessary sustenance to wicked demons: to engage in sacrifice is to align oneself with those beings who are the enemies of the true God and who actively work against the best interests of humanity. Understood within such a framework, the practice of animal sacrifice can allow for no compromises. Compared with the account of Pionius, then, the *Acts of Carpus* have an even more obviously didactic purpose: not only do they model the way that Christians should react to animal sacrifice, they also provide an explanation for why they should react in that way. Nevertheless, both texts make the same crucial point: in contrast to the 'lapsed' of Cyprian's Carthage, true Christians should be willing to undergo the most painful of deaths rather than make any compromise with the practice of animal sacrifice.

[71] *Acta Carpi* (A) 6 (p. 22 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 23, slightly modified).
[72] *Acta Carpi* (A) 7 (p. 22 Musurillo; with trans. at p. 23, slightly modified).

Conclusion

The particular stress on animal sacrifice that we find in the acts of Pionius and Carpus becomes a recurring feature of later Christian texts dating to the fourth century or later. We find it in many later martyr accounts, in which demands and refusals to sacrifice typically have a prominent place.[73] It is also a major topic in the large-scale apologetic works of the early fourth century. Arnobius, for example, devotes the first half of the seventh and final book of his treatise *Against the Nations* to an extensive critique of the practice of animal sacrifice, followed by shorter discussions of incense and wine.[74] Eusebius likewise includes an extensive discussion of animal sacrifice in his *Preparation for the Gospel*, framed, as with Carpus' responses to the proconsul, within the broader context of demonological discourse.[75] Although the overall scale of these works far surpasses that of the earlier apologies of Justin, Athenagoras, Tertullian and Minucius Felix, the amount of space that they devote to the practice of animal sacrifice nevertheless provides a striking contrast to the brief and offhand remarks of earlier writers.

We cannot, of course, attribute this new focus on animal sacrifice solely to the decree of Decius. Although it was the first imperial directive to require people to offer an animal sacrifice, it was certainly not the last. Valerian's anti-Christian measure apparently required Christians to engage in some type of cult act, although it is impossible to determine from the extant evidence whether it specified animal sacrifice.[76] In contrast, there is no doubt that animal sacrifice had a prominent place in the persecutions of Diocletian and his associates. According to Lactantius, the persecutions proper were preceded by a measure directed at the army alone: because Diocletian believed that some Christian soldiers, by making the sign of the cross, had interfered with a sacrifice over which he was presiding, he required all soldiers to offer a sacrifice or, if they refused, to be discharged.[77] Although animal sacrifice played no part in the first anti-

[73] See e.g. (with the numbering of Musurillo, *Acts*) the acts of Conon (no. 13), Julius the Veteran (no. 19), Agape and her companions (no. 22), Irenaeus (no. 23), Crispina (no. 24), Euplus (no. 25) and Phileas (no. 27).

[74] Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 7.1–25 and 26–31, respectively (pp. 343–82 Marchesi).

[75] Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 4.9–23 (*GCS* 43, pp. 179–215).

[76] Our two main sources, the *Passio Cypriani* 1.1 (p. 238 Rebillard) and the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria quoted by Eusebius (*Historia ecclesiastica* 7.11.7 [*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 656]) refer in general terms to worshipping the gods (*Romanam religionem colere* and *Romanas caerimonias recognoscere* in the former, προσκυνεῖν τοὺς θεούς in the latter), but do not use any more precise language.

[77] Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 10.1–4 (p. 16 Creed); the date is uncertain.

Christian edicts that he issued some time later, it re-emerged as the persecution wore on. The third edict, issued in the autumn of 303 CE, extended a pardon to any arrested Christian clergy who agreed to offer a sacrifice, and the fourth, dating probably to the early months of 304 CE, apparently required all inhabitants of the empire to sacrifice to the gods on pain of death. With that directive Diocletian effectively revived Decius' measure, although now within the context of an explicitly anti-Christian campaign. After his abdication in 305 CE, Maximinus, his successor in the East, seems to have renewed the requirement to sacrifice in 306 and again in 309 CE.[78] By the time that the persecutions finally came to an end in 311 CE, then, animal sacrifice had been a burning issue for Christians for a decade or more, and it was no doubt these more recent events, more than those of Decius' time, that provided the immediate context for the increased attention that Christian apologists and martyrologists of the fourth century devoted to the practice of animal sacrifice.[79]

I would nevertheless argue that Decius' edict marked a turning point not only in the emphasis that Roman authorities put on animal sacrifice but also in the place of animal sacrifice in the Christian imagination. Although the legislation of Valerian and the Tetrarchs was different from Decius' in that it was specifically directed against Christians in a way that his had not been, Decius' use of the bureaucratic apparatus to enforce the performance of animal sacrifice must have provided a significant precedent. Similarly, the martyr accounts that appeared in the wake of Decius' measure undoubtedly provided models for the emphasis on animal sacrifice in later martyr acts. Although the authors of these later accounts presumably knew little about the specifics of Decius' decree, a general recollection of its effects merged with those of later imperial decrees into a stereotyped account of the bad old days, when wicked emperors and cruel officials tormented Christian heroes with their demands to perform animal sacrifice.

Can we say, then, that the decree of Decius marked a turning point in the development of religious violence in the ancient Mediterranean world? As I noted in my introduction, my goal has been to answer a more precise question about the role of animal sacrifice in the Roman persecution of

[78] Throughout this paragraph I draw on my earlier discussion, 'Persecution of Christians', 211–15.

[79] The most detailed recent analysis of Arnobius' *Adversus nationes* argues for a date of 302–305 CE: M. B. Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (Oxford, 1995) 47–93. Eusebius is widely agreed to have written the *Praeparatio evangelica* between 312 and 324 CE: Johnson, *Eusebius*, 19. The later martyr acts mostly date the events that they describe, if at all, to the early fourth century.

Christians. I have tried to make a case that, through a series of contingent developments that extended over the course of several centuries, the practice of animal sacrifice acquired a new kind of ideological weight and took on a more central role in the violence that those who wielded power in the Roman world brought to bear on Christians. Although this was a gradual process, I hope to have shown that the key shift occurred in the wake of Decius' edict in the mid-third century. Yet to transfer my answer from this more precisely formulated question to a more broadly formulated one is not a straightforward business, because answers to the latter type of question depend not so much on an evidentiary basis as on the preferred analytical framework. Although it may be relatively uncontroversial to characterise animal sacrifice as a religious practice (and I would put the stress here on 'relatively'), it is by no means a necessary corollary that an increasing emphasis on the practice is in itself proof that the violence embodied in the persecution was becoming more religious. Andreas Bendlin, in his thoughtful and provocative contribution to this volume, argues forcefully that we would be wrong to interpret Decius' decree 'as the historical moment when the state, enforcing that all partake in sacrifice, first used violence to assert the authority of its own religious system in the face of religious dissidence',[80] not because we have the facts wrong or even because we have misinterpreted the evidence, but because the larger analytical framework within which we locate this episode is warped. When is violence religious? The answer we give, it seems, will always depend on what we mean by the question.

[80] See Bendlin, this volume, p. 138.

CHAPTER 8

The Great Persecution and Imperial Ideology: Patterns of Communication on Tetrarchic Coinage[*]

Erika Manders

Explaining the Outbreak of the Great Persecution

Only a few years before freedom of religion was proclaimed within the Roman empire, the last empire-wide persecution of Christians was instigated.[1] An imperial edict that ordered the razing of churches, the burning of the Scriptures, the loss of civil rights especially for Christians of high status and the re-enslavement of (Christian) Caesariani was published in Nicomedia on 23 February 303.[2] This act, appropriately planned on the day of the feast of Terminalia (in honour of Terminus, the god of boundaries), ended the 'peace of Gallienus', which lasted for approximately forty years.[3] The issuance of this particular edict was not an isolated

[*] I would like to thank the audience at the conference 'Religious Violence in the Ancient World' for valuable comments as well as Richard Burgess for his critical remarks on a first draft of this chapter. A shorter Dutch version of the chapter ('Het idee achter de praktijk. De Grote Vervolging in numismatisch perspectief') appeared in O. Hekster and C. Jansen (eds.), *Diocletianus: Tussen eenheid en versnippering* (Nijmegen, 2019) 92–109.

[1] The first empire-wide persecution took place in the reign of the Emperor Decius (249–51), the second under Valerian (253–60). See e.g. C. J. Haas, 'Imperial Religious Policy and Valerian's Persecution of the Church, AD 257–260', *ChHist* 52 (1983) 133–44; J. B. Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *JRS* 89 (1999) 135–54; E. Manders, 'Communicating Messages through Coins: A New Approach to the Emperor Decius', *Jaarboek Munt- en Penningkunde* 98 (2011) 1–22, and *Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, AD 193–284* (Leiden, 2012) 22–23; and Bremmer, pp. 60–61, and Rives, pp. 187–90, 200, both this volume.

[2] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.2.4 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 742), 8.5.1 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 746), and *De martyribus Palestinae* pr. 1 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 907); Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 13.1 (p. 20 Creed); *Passio Felicis episcopi* 1 (p. 266 Musurillo), on which see e.g. S. Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, AD 284–324* (Oxford, 1996) 179–80; R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh, 2004) 62.

[3] On army purges before the beginning of the persecution and the letter on the Manichaeans, see P. Keresztes, 'From the Great Persecution to the Peace of Galerius', *VChr* (1983) 379–99 at 380; Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 58–59, respectively. On the Terminalia, see Keresztes, 'From the Great Persecution', 381. On the 'peace of Gallienus': P. Keresztes, 'The Peace of Gallienus: 260–303 AD', *WS* 9 (1975) 174–222; Keresztes, 'From the Great Persecution', 379. See also T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA, 1981) 138, who states: 'After the accession of

incident; more edicts were to follow. A second one was issued in the summer of the same year and prescribed the imprisonment of the clergy. In November 303, the third imperial edict was posted, which ordered that clergy in prison must sacrifice (and, after doing so, be freed).[4] The last persecution edict of the first Tetrarchy was published in 304 and commanded universal sacrifice.[5]

Under the second Tetrarchy the persecution of Christians persisted. According to Eusebius, Maximinus Daia issued an edict in 306 ordering universal sacrifice in his part of the empire.[6] This was effected by means of summoning individuals by their registered names. It is unclear whether Daia's edicts inaugurated the next level of the Great Persecution because of the census rolls that were now used for enforcing universal sacrifice, or whether they just formed part of the execution of the aforementioned fourth edict that was published in 304.[7] Be that as it may, Daia issued another edict in 309, again commanding civic communities to sacrifice and, in addition, ordering the reconstruction of temples, the appointment of high priests for the provinces, and the sprinkling of food in marketplaces and of sacrificial libations on entrants to the baths.[8]

In 311, an official attempt was made to terminate the persecution of Christians. Through a letter to provincials, posted in Nicomedia, Galerius allowed his Christian subjects in the East to practise their faith as long as they did not disturb public order.[9] This, however, did not mark the end of persecution.[10] Although Daia seems initially to have relaxed the persecution of Christians in his part of the empire,[11] he changed his attitude and six months after the issuance of Galerius' letter he took action to prevent

Gallienus, sporadic executions of Christians occurred . . ., but the Christian church began to enjoy toleration everywhere'.

[4] As Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs*, 181 states, this edict coincided with the celebration of the *vicennalia*.

[5] See also Bremmer, p. 61, and Rives, pp. 200–201, both this volume.

[6] Eusebius, *De martyribus Palestinae* 4.8 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 914).

[7] Keresztes, 'From the Great Persecution', 384; Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs*, 182; Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 66.

[8] Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs*, 185–86.

[9] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.16–17 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 788–94); Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 34 (p. 52 Creed). See Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 39.

[10] On Daia's persecution and his so-called 'persecution issues', see E. Manders, 'Coins against Christianity: Maximinus' "Persecution Issues" in Context', in E. Manders and D. Slootjes (eds.), *Leadership, Ideology and Crowds in the Roman Empire of the 4th century AD* (Stuttgart, 2020) 49–60.

[11] S. Mitchell, 'Maximinus and the Christians in AD 312: A New Latin Inscription', *JRS* 78 (1988) 105–24 at 113; J. van Heesch, 'The Last Civic Coinages and the Religious Policy of Maximinus Daza (AD 312)', *NC* 153 (1993) 65–75 at 73.

Christians from meeting in cemeteries.[12] In addition, rescripts to particular cities, such as Tyre, Arycanda and Colbasa, inform us that the emperor granted permission to these cities to expel the Christians from their grounds.[13] According to Eusebius and Lactantius, these cities' petitions were instigated by the emperor himself.[14] Finally, Eusebius mentions that Daia put the most notable preachers to death and that he conducted a military campaign against the Christian Armenians.[15] It was only in May 313 that the emperor finally granted concessions to the Christians and promulgated an edict which restored privileges and properties to them. One month later Constantine and Licinius agreed on religious freedom for the whole empire.[16]

Although the ancient sources provide us with some information as to which particular anti-Christian measures were taken between 303 and 313, they do not prove of much help regarding two important aspects of the Great Persecution. First, the exact results of the anti-Christian measures taken between 303 and 313 can hardly be grasped. We do not know whether some edicts were enforced throughout the whole empire or whether they were restricted to one particular part of the realm: the measures may have been carried out unevenly by the different emperors and governors, and the reports (Eusebius, Lactantius and the often unreliable martyr acts) present an uneven picture of the victims across the empire.[17] Second, the motives for the Great Persecution that are mentioned by Eusebius and Lactantius, both eyewitnesses, are doubtful.[18] According to Eusebius, the Christians' own behaviour caused the wrath of God and thus the persecution.[19] Lactantius, on the other hand, argues that the persecution was instigated by the Emperor Galerius who was driven by a personal hatred for the Christians.[20] Yet, as Gelzer and Davies

[12] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 9.2 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 806–808), with Mitchell, 'Maximinus and the Christians', 114.

[13] For the epigraphical evidence, see Mitchell, 'Maximinus and the Christians', 108–11, 114. See also Van Heesch, 'Last Civic Coinages', 74.

[14] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 9.2 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 806–808); Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 36.3 (p. 54 Creed).

[15] Van Heesch, 'Last Civic Coinages', 74.

[16] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 62.

[17] On the enforcement of the edicts: Keresztes, 'From the Great Persecution', 387; Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs*, 182. They do not agree, for instance, on whether the fourth edict was enforced both in the East and in the West. On differences in the application of the edicts, see Keresztes, 'From the Great Persecution', 386, 390: Constantius seems to have been very moderate. On the reports, see ibid., 385–90.

[18] P. Aubreville, 'Zur Motivation der tetrachischen Christenverfolgung', *ZAC* 13 (2009) 415–29 at 416–19.

[19] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.1.7 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 738).

[20] Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 10–11 (pp. 16, 18 Creed).

have convincingly demonstrated, the leading role of Galerius cannot be supported; Diocletian must have been the instigator of the Great Persecution.[21]

Because of the bias of these ancient authors, many modern scholars have tried to trace why the highest authorities within the empire instigated a persecution after a pause of more than forty years. Several possible motives have been suggested: conflicts within the Christian communities, the religious basis (the Iovius–Herculius ideology) underlying Tetrarchic rule and the strengthening of identity by means of the marginalisation of 'others'.[22] As for the first motive, an empire-wide persecution that lasted ten years seems a somewhat excessive instrument to suppress intra-religious conflicts within Christian communities, which were in fact local rivalries between bishops.[23] Moreover, Schwarte, who builds on Kolb's theory and argues that the Great Persecution was instigated in order to protect the Iovius–Herculius ideology before the transition to the second Tetrarchy took place, produces a problematic explanation: the coins of both Diocletian and Maximian display a decrease of references to Jupiter and Hercules after 303, which seems to reflect a waning importance of both gods in imperial ideology.[24] Likewise, the presupposed marginalisation of 'others'

[21] M. Gelzer, 'Der Urheber der Christenverfolgung von 303', in *Vom Wesen und Wandel der Kirche: Zum siebzigsten Geburtstag von Eberhard Vischer* (Basel, 1935) 35–44, who points to Lactantius' rhetorical constructions and their theological meanings (Galerius' illness); P. S. Davies, 'The Origin and Purpose of the Persecution of AD 303', *JThS* 40 (1989) 66–94 at 68–69, who demonstrates that there is no evidence in Eusebius, Lactantius or the martyr acts that Galerius persecuted more severely than Diocletian. See also R. Bratož, 'Die diokletianische Christenverfolgung in den Donau- und Balkanprovinzen', in A. Demandt, A. Goltz and H. Schlange-Schöningen (eds.), *Diokletian und die Tetrarchie: Aspekte einer Zeitenwende* (Berlin, 2004) 115–40.

[22] Conflicts within Christian communities: W. Portmann, 'Zu den Motiven der Diokletianischen Christenverfolgung', *Historia* 39 (1990) 212–48. Religious basis of Tetrarchic ideology: F. Kolb, *Diocletian und die erste Tetrarchie* (Berlin, 1987) 113; 33; K. H. Schwarte, 'Diokletians Christengesetz', in R. Günther and S. Rebenich (eds.), *E fontibus haurire: Beiträge zur römischen Geschichte und zu ihren Hilfswissenschaften* (Paderborn, 1994) 203–40; F. Kolb, 'Praesens Deus: Kaiser und Gott unter der Tetrarchie', in Demandt et al., *Diokletian und die Tetrarchie*, 27–37. Marginalisation of others: Aubreville, 'Zur Motivation', 423. For a detailed overview of possible motives, see ibid., 420–23.

[23] Schwarte, 'Diokletians Christengesetz', 234; Aubreville, 'Zur Motivation', 421.

[24] Diocletian: 20.1% of the coin types issued before 303 display references to Jupiter, whereas only 1.5% of the coin types issued from 303 onwards portray the chief god; 5.4% of the coin types issued before 303 refer to Hercules, whereas no references to Hercules are visible on coin types issued from 303 onwards. Maximianus Herculius: 9.8% of the coin types issued before 303 display references to Jupiter, whereas coin types issued from 303 onwards bear no references to Jupiter; 22.4% of the coin types issued before 303 refer to Hercules, whereas only 3.6% of the coin types minted from 303 onwards refer to Hercules. However, the references to both gods on the coins of Constantius and Galerius increase slightly after 303; Jupiter goes from 5 to 9.2% on the coins of Galerius and from 2.6 to 4.2% on the coins of Constantius, Hercules goes from 0.5 to 2.2% on the coins of Galerius and from 2.6 to 9.8% on the coins of Constantius.

as a means to create common identity shortly before the change of rule seems a bit far-fetched; public persecution (such as games in which Christians fought against wild animals) and active participation of civilians in persecution acts do not necessarily point at the exoticisation of Christians.[25]

Since the motives that have been brought up are all problematic in some way or another, the aim of this chapter is to offer a new impulse to the debate on the outbreak of the Great Persecution by starting from a completely different angle: coins. An analysis of imperial coinage forms a good point of departure when searching for particular imperial motives.[26] When it comes to the Great Persecution, imperial laws do not prove to be very helpful, as not all texts of the edicts are preserved. In addition, literary sources are obviously biased and reflect the positions of their authors. Coins, however, were issued by the central authorities which means that they can be considered official documents.[27] As coins were minted without interruption, they thus provide a coherent overview of a particular regime's priorities from the imperial perspective. In which way, then, could an analysis of imperial ideology on coins help us to gain more insights into the outbreak of the Great Persecution? Do the messages on Tetrarchic coins perhaps point in the direction of specific motives underlying the last empire-wide persecution of Christians?

[25] Aubreville, 'Zur Motivation', 425.

[26] See e.g. Manders, 'Communicating Messages through Coins', an examination of coins minted by the Emperor Decius, which demonstrates that a numismatic analysis can offer new perspectives in this respect: the limited number of religious messages (only 5 out of 160 coin types bore a religious theme), together with the dominant presence of military and geographical messages on Decius' coins, seems to indicate that the edict of 249/50 was issued by this emperor in order to legitimise his power and not as part of a comprehensive religious policy. On this edict, see also Rives, pp. 187–190, this volume.

[27] The question as to who was responsible for the minting of coins, emperor or mint masters, is difficult to answer. What we can say with certainty, however, is that decisions about images and legends were made at the top; imperial coins show the emperor as he wanted to be seen. On mint masters and their influence on coin types, see T. V. Buttrey, 'Vespasian as Moneyer', *NC* 12 (1972) 89–109; B. Levick, 'Propaganda and the Imperial Coinage', *Antichthon* 16 (1982) 104–16; L. Claes, 'A Note on the Coin Type Selection by the *a rationibus*', *Latomus* 73 (2014) 163–73. On the influence of the emperor on coin types, see C. H. V. Sutherland, 'The Intelligibility of Roman Imperial Coin Types', *JRS* 49 (1959) 46–55; E. Manders, 'Boodschappen van de keizer? Monetaire propaganda in de Romeinse keizertijd', *Lampas* 44 (2011) 230–47. On the shared responsibility of mint masters and emperor, see R. Wolters, 'Die Geschwindigkeit der Zeit und die Gefahr der Bilder: Münzbilder und Münzpropaganda in der römischen Kaiserzeit', in G. Weber and M. Zimmermann (eds.), *Propaganda – Selbstdarstellung – Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreich des 1. Jhs. n.Chr.* (Stuttgart, 2003) 175–204. On coins as official documents, see e.g. A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus', *JRS* 76 (1986) 66–87 at 67; C. F. Noreña, 'The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues', *JRS* 91 (2001) 146–68 at 147; Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, 32–33.

In this chapter, the focus is on the coins minted between 284, the year in which Diocletian was acclaimed emperor, and 313, the year which marks the collapse of the Tetrarchic system and the end of the Great Persecution. The messages that are present on the reverses of the coin types struck between 284 and 313 will be analysed quantitatively in order to obtain a broad overview of (aspects of) imperial ideology in this period and to distinguish patterns and trends therein.[28] First, the general picture of Tetrarchic ideology will be discussed by means of (1) a comparison between the coin types of the Tetrarchs and those of selected predecessors in order to contextualise the Tetrarchic messages, and (2) a comparison between the messages on the coin types of the different Tetrarchic rulers. Second, one particular aspect of imperial ideology, religious representation, will be dealt with separately in order to obtain more insights into the emperors' attitudes towards the gods before and during the years of the Great Persecution.

Tetrarchic Coinage: The General Picture

In order to map the ideological messages spread by the reverses of Tetrarchic coins, I have created a database of the 4,844 coin types which are recorded in *Roman Imperial Coinage* for the period between 284 and 313.[29] Regarding

[28] Coins' reverses are less static and more susceptible to change than the obverses; they thus provide more distinct images of emperors and their reigns; see Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, 39. For quantitative analyses of coin types, see ibid.; L. Claes, *Kinship and Coinage: Ancestors and Family on Roman Imperial Coinage during the Principate* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Nijmegen, 2013). For the correlation between coin types and actual coins, see Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, 53–62.

[29] In the quantitative analysis that follows I do not distinguish between different mints, under the responsibility of different rulers, and different stages within the period 284–313, as these will obscure general ideological patterns overarching different chronological phases and geographical areas. The number of coin types that were struck in the separate mints for the different rulers between 284 and 313 were in many cases small (with the exception of Lyons, Rome, Siscia and Trier), which hampers a quantitative analysis by mint. Moreover, the majority (*c.* 60%) of the coin types minted in the name of the rulers who reigned the longest in this particular time span, Diocletian and Maximian, were issued during the first Tetrarchy (293–305). A distinction between different metals is not relevant since this chapter does not deal with the reception of ideological messages. Finally, making a distinction between coin types issued before and after the outbreak of the Great Persecution in 303 is not helpful either, as this will yield an unbalanced picture (both Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in 305, emperors started their reign only after 303, etc.). A more detailed analysis also seems to confirm the general patterns: taking as a test case the representation of deities during the first Tetrarchy, it becomes clear that the majority of coin types displaying a particular deity (Diocletian: 70.4%; Maximian: 78.2%; Galerius: 58%; Constantius: 70%) were issued in the West, in mints that fell under the responsibility of Maximian and Constantius. Coin types of, for example, Diocletian featuring Jupiter, with whom the *augustus* of the East had a special connection, were thus mainly struck by Western mints (60.4%). This fits in

Table 1 *Number of different messages on the coin types of Septimius Severus, Gallienus, Diocletian and Galerius*

Emperor	Different messages[a]
Septimius Severus (193–211, n=933)	61
Gallienus (253–268, n=1,154)	66
Diocletian (284–305, n=937)	46
Galerius (293–311, n=709)	35

[a] For distinguishing different messages, the legend has been considered decisive. Subtypes of specific messages are not counted as separate messages: *Concordia Augustorum* and *Concordia militum*, for example, are both considered as messages propagating *concordia*.

the messages that are present on the coin types minted between 284 and 313, three peculiarities stand out.[30] First, Tetrarchic coins communicated fewer different messages than the coins issued by emperors in the previous century. A comparison between the coins of Septimius Severus and Gallienus on the one hand and those of Diocletian and Galerius on the other makes this clear (see Table 1).

I have selected these emperors because of the comparable lengths of their reigns: Septimius Severus reigned for eighteen and Gallienus for fifteen years, Diocletian ruled for twenty-one and Galerius for eighteen years. In addition, both Septimius Severus and Diocletian were acclaimed emperor by the military and created their own dynasty, whereas Gallienus and Galerius started their rules as *caesares* (they became *augusti* after respectively seven and twelve years).[31] Finally, I have chosen Septimius Severus and Gallienus because of the chronological spread of their reigns over the third century: Severus ruled in the first part of this particular period, Gallienus in the second. When comparing Severus with Diocletian and Gallienus with Galerius, Table 1 shows that the coins of the earlier emperors bear a larger number of different messages (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of all messages). Prominent messages on the coins of Septimius Severus and Gallienus that are absent from the coins of Diocletian and Galerius mainly consist of references to a variety of gods (such as

the general pattern of all coin types issued during the first Tetrarchy: 84.5% of Diocletian's types, 85.1% of Maximian's types, 84% of Galerius' types and 86.7% of Constantius' types were issued in the West.

[30] Only coins bearing a portrait of a single emperor on the obverse are included.

[31] Constantius died shortly after he was acclaimed *augustus*. Licinius' and Constantine's reigns both continued after 313.

Apollo, Bacchus, Ceres, Juno, Venus, Diana, Janus, Mercury, Neptune, Vesta and Vulcan), imperial virtues (*indulgentia*, *munificentia*, *justitia*, *liberalitas*, *pudicitia*), empresses and the military (legion series, *adlocutio*, *profectio*).[32]

Second, not only did the Tetrarchs propagate fewer different messages through their coins than their third-century predecessors, but the emperors reigning in the period 284–313 also communicated more or less the same types of messages. Only fifty-nine different types of messages are propagated on the coins of the eight emperors who ruled in the period 284–313 (see Appendix 2). Of these fifty-nine messages, ten were communicated solely by one ruler, eight by all, and more than half of them (thirty-one messages) were disseminated by the coins of four or more emperors.[33] The messages that were propagated on the coins of all eight rulers consist of references to three deities (Jupiter, Hercules and Mars), the health (*salus*) and military prowess (*virtus*) of the emperors, their political functions and honorary titles (titulature), the vows made for the success and perpetuity of the emperors' reigns (*vota*) and the spirit (*genius*) either of the Roman people or of the emperor(s) themselves. In addition, twenty messages were communicated solely through coins issued during the first Tetrarchy.[34] Of these twenty messages, references to AVSPIC FEL, *claritas*, *comitatus*, Minerva, *pietas* and 'XCVI' were stamped onto the coins of all four rulers (Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius and Constantius I). Only the coins with the legends COMITATVS, thus honouring the small field armies that accompanied the emperor, and XCVI (a reference to the fact that ninety-

[32] Messages on the coins of Diocletian and Galerius that are absent from Severus' and Gallienus' coins: AVSPIC FEL, *Claritas*, *Comitatus*, *Fatis/es victribus*, *Gaudete Romani*, *Praesidia reipublicae*, *Quies*, XCVI, *Ubique victores*, *Utilitas*.

[33] Messages communicated by one ruler (n=10): *Annona* (Diocletian), Co-rulers (Diocletian), *Consecratio* (Constantius), *Dioscuri* (Constantius), *Gloria exercitus Galliarum* (Constantine), *Liberator urbis suae* (Constantine), *Nobilissimus caesar* (Maximinus Daia), *Profectio* (Licinius), *Redditor lucis aeternae* (Constantius), *Spes* (Constantine). Messages communicated by two rulers (n=10): *Aequitas*, AVGG, *Clementia*, *Conservator*, *Fates/is victribus*, *Plures natales felices*, *Praesidia reipublicae*, *Quies*, *Restitutor*, *Saeculares*. Messages communicated by three rulers (n=8): *Abundantia*, *Aeternitas*, *Gaudium*, *Laetitia*, *Memoria*, *Pacatores*, *Perpetuitas*, *SPQR optimo principi*. Messages communicated by four rulers (n=8): AVSPIC FEL, *Claritas*, *Comitatus*, *Fortuna*, Minerva, *Pietas*, *Providentia*, XCVI. Messages communicated by five rulers (n=4): *Adventus*, *Fides*, *Pax*, *Roma*. Messages communicated by six rulers (n=5): *Oriens*, *Princeps iuventutis*, Sol, *Utilitas publica*, *Victor*(*es*). Messages communicated by seven rulers (n=6): Carthago, *Concordia*, *Felicitas*, *Moneta*, *Securitas*, *Victoria*. Messages communicated by eight rulers (n=8): *Genius*, Hercules, Jupiter, Mars, *Salus*, Titulature, *Virtus*, *Vota*.

[34] *Abundantia*, *Aequitas*, *Aeternitas*, *Annona*, AVSPIC FEL, *Claritas*, *Clementia*, Co-rulers, *Comitatus*, *Dioscuri*, *Fates/is victribus*, *Gaudium*, *Laetitia*, Minerva, *Pacatores*, *Pietas*, *Praesidia reipublicae*, *Redditor lucis aeternae*, *Saeculares*, XCVI.

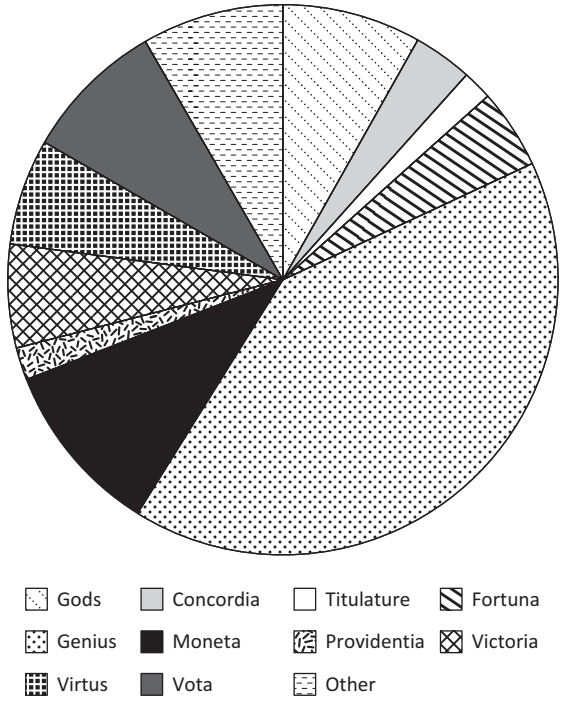

Fig. 1 Messages on the coin types of Diocletian (293–305; n=573)

six coins were made from one pound of pure silver), have no religious connotation.[35]

Third, looking at the emphasis that is put on particular messages, strong similarities are visible between the coins of the first Tetrarchy's rulers (see Figures 1–4).[36] Most prominent on their coins are references to the spirit of the Roman people.[37] The popularity of this message (GENIO POPVLI ROMANI), which can be interpreted as a 'call to unity in *Romanitas*', was

[35] 'XCVI' was not only a mark of value, as it advertised the high silver content of the coins bearing this legend and thus referred to the monetary reforms which were carried out in order to improve and stabilise the monetary system. Moreover, most *argentei* did *not* bear this legend, which emphasises the ideological function of 'XCVI'.

[36] The Great Persecution was instigated during the first Tetrarchy. After the end of the first Tetrarchy rulers succeeded each other more rapidly and the emphasis that Severus, Daia, Licinius and Constantine put on particular messages differed more.

[37] One *genius* coin type of Maximian bears the legend GENIO IMPERATORIS (*RIC* VI, Alexandria, no. 102), but was issued between 308 and 310.

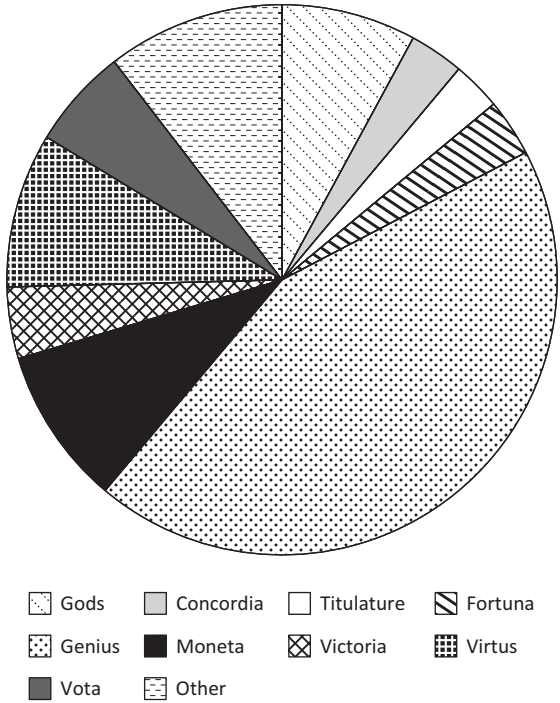

Fig. 2 Messages on the coin types of Maximian (293–305; n=594)

unprecedented during the rule of the Tetrarchs.[38] Slight differences, especially regarding the propagation of *genius*, *moneta* as well as references to imperial titulature and *princeps iuventutis*, can be detected between, on the one hand, the coin types of the *augusti* and, on the other hand, the *caesares*.

Tetrarchic Coinage: Religious Representation

Turning to the emperors' association with deities, it is clear that this was an important representational theme on the coins of most rulers in the period 284–313 (with the exception of Galerius and Constantius), but not a

[38] C. H. V. Sutherland, 'Some Political Notions in Coin Types between 294 and 313', *JRS* 53 (1963) 14–20 at 18. Coin types bearing the legend GENIO POPVLI ROMANI were already issued during the Roman Republic, and during the empire they first appeared immediately after the death of Nero. Thereafter, coins with this particular legend were struck on a regular basis. See J. M. Jones, *A Dictionary of Ancient Roman Coins* (London, 1990) 125.

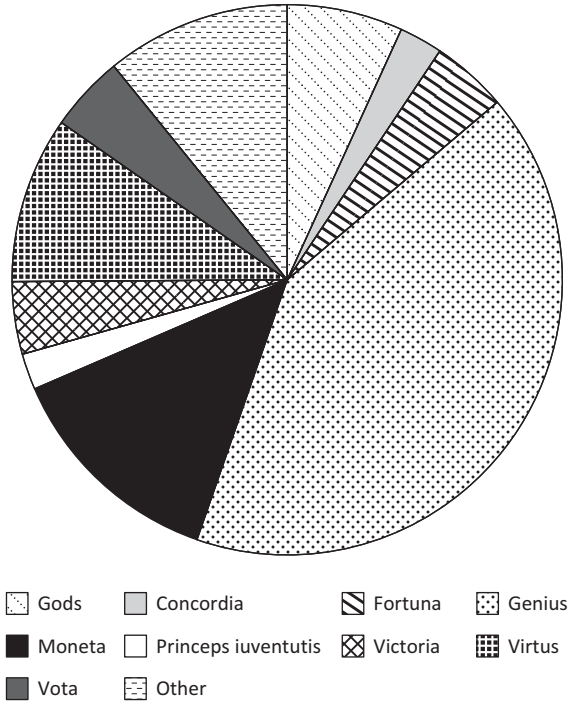

Fig. 3 Messages on the coin types of Galerius (293–305; n=469)

dominant one.[39] This changed under Licinius and especially Constantine; respectively 37% and 42% of their coin types issued between 308 and 313 (Licinius) and 306 and 313 (Constantine) bear images of Olympian deities. Conspicuously, of the 317 coin types that were minted under Constantine in the period 306–13 which represent a deity, 122 types were issued in the years 312–13, thus around the time when the battle at the Milvian Bridge took place and the proclamation of the freedom of religion.[40] Possibly, Constantine wanted to appease his subjects, chiefly the aristocrats, who were at this point still predominantly pagan.[41]

[39] Diocletian: 21%; Maximian: 17%; Galerius: 9%; Constantius: 7%; Maximinus Daia: 28%; Severus II: 15%. The percentages are based on the numbers of coin types on which divine association forms the main representational theme (e.g. coin types referring to the *virtus* of the emperor in the legend and bearing an image of a god are excluded here). Cf. B. Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian* (London, 2009) 120, who states that 'Diocletian's imperial ideology had been suffused with religious concepts and images from the beginning'.

[40] Furthermore, forty-eight coin types are dated to the period 310/11–13.

[41] N. Lenski, 'Evoking the Pagan Past: *Instinctu divinitatis* and Constantine's Capture of Rome', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008) 204–57 at 207.

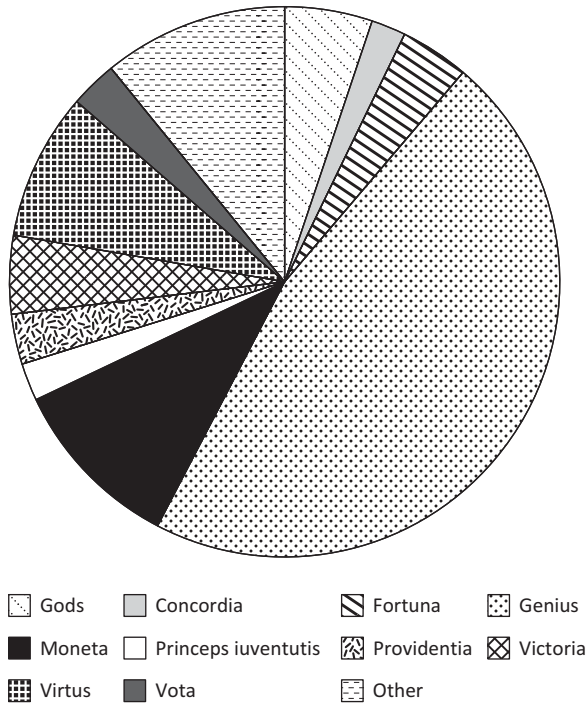

Fig. 4 Messages on the coin types of Constantius I (293–305; n=542)

Only six deities figure on the coin types minted in the period 284–313.[42] This stands in sharp contrast with the period 193–284, in which twenty different deities adorned the imperial coins. For example, Septimius Severus depicted fourteen gods on his coins and Gallienus eighteen.[43] All emperors in the period 284–313 displayed on their coins Jupiter, Hercules, Mars and Sol, who were also the most prominent deities on coins issued in the previous century.[44] Minerva appears only on coins

[42] Only references to 'personalised multifaceted gods' (J. R. Fears, 'The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology', in *ANRW* II.17.2 [1981] 827–948 at 840) are included here, references to deified personifications are omitted. Furthermore, *all* coin types that refer to deities are taken into account here (e.g. also coin types that refer to the *virtus* of the emperor in the legend and bear an image of a deity).

[43] Septimius Severus: Jupiter, Hercules, Mars, Sol, Apollo, Aesculapius, Ceres, Dea Caelestis, Juno, Liber, Minerva, Neptune, Venus, Vesta. Gallienus: Jupiter, Hercules, Mars, Sol, Apollo, Aesculapius, Diana, Janus, Juno, Liber, Mercury, Minerva, Neptune, Saturn, Sarapis, Venus, Vesta, Vulcan. See Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, 316–23.

[44] Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, 97–98.

Table 2 *Deities on coin types minted in 284–313*

	Jupiter	Hercules	Mars	Sol	Minerva	Sarapis
Diocletian	x	x	x	x	x	
Maximian	x	x	x	x	x	
Galerius	x	x	x	x	x	
Constantius	x	x	x	x	x	
Maximinus Daia	x	x	x	x		x
Severus II	x	x	x	x		
Licinius	x	x	x	x		x
Constantine	x	x	x	x		x

minted before 296; thereafter she completely disappears from imperial coins and never returns. The disappearance of Minerva, who, as one of the Capitoline Triad, had a special connection with the city of Rome, could perhaps be explained by the declining importance of this city.[45] Rome officially lost its position of primacy within the empire when the Tetrarchs chose other cities as their imperial residences. This development, which had been underway during the third century, might have a connection with the disappearance of this goddess from imperial coins.[46] Sarapis is present solely on coins of Maximinus Daia, Licinius and Constantine that were produced in Eastern mints (see Table 2).[47]

Even within such a limited selection of deities, each emperor paid special attention only to one god: Diocletian, Galerius and Licinius to Jupiter; Maximian, Constantius and Severus to Hercules; and Constantine and, to a lesser extent, Maximinus Daia to Sol (see Figures 5–12). Before 289, Diocletian and Maximian adopted the *signa* 'Jovius' and 'Herculius', thereby establishing a dynastic Jupiter-line in the East and a Hercules-line in the West.[48] These lines are also visible on the coinage, in the East up to Galerius and in the West up to Severus. Licinius, who was acclaimed *augustus* of the West in 308 but stayed in the East, put the chief deity prominently on his coins, thereby adhering to the Jupiter-line in the East.

[45] The goddess Roma was sometimes even depicted with the attributes of Minerva; see Jones, *Dictionary*, 185.

[46] See R. Stepper, *Augustus et sacerdos: Untersuchungen zum römischen Kaiser als Priester* (Stuttgart, 2003) 249–55; R. Hedlund, *'. . . Achieved Nothing Worthy of Memory': Coinage and Authority in the Roman Empire, c. AD 260–295* (Uppsala, 2008) 124–73; Manders, *Coining Images of Power*, 142.

[47] Only the head of Sarapis is depicted on the coins and always in combination with an image of Sol or Genius.

[48] Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 54.

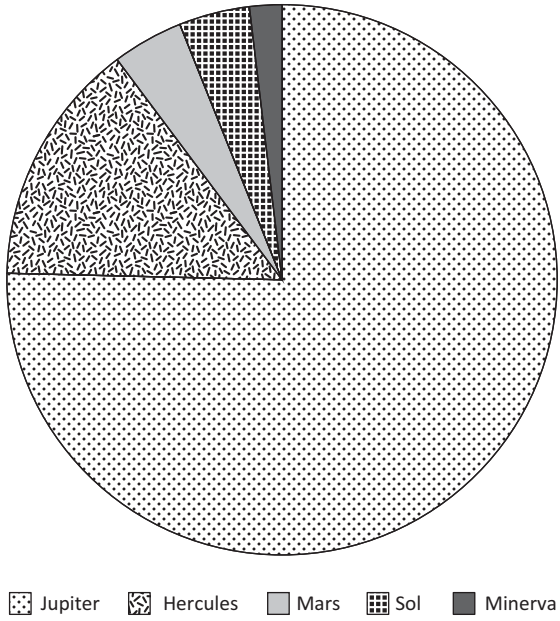

Fig. 5 Deities on the coin types of Diocletian (n=256)

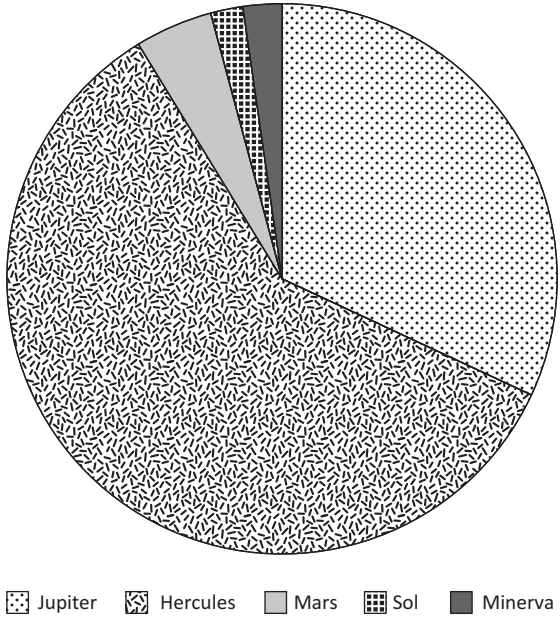

Fig. 6 Deities on the coin types of Maximian (n=254)

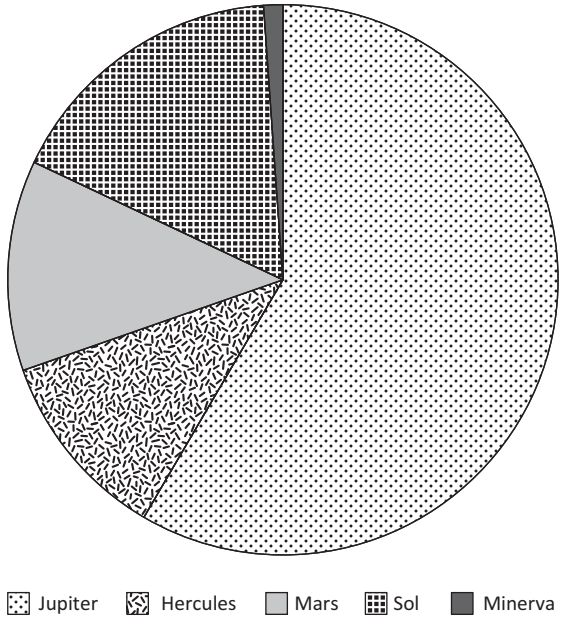

Fig. 7 Deities on the coin types of Galerius (n=87)

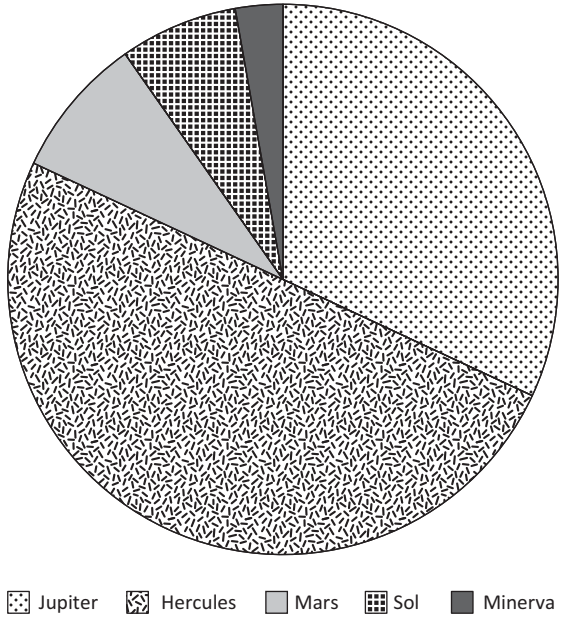

Fig. 8 Deities on the coin types of Constantius I (n=69)

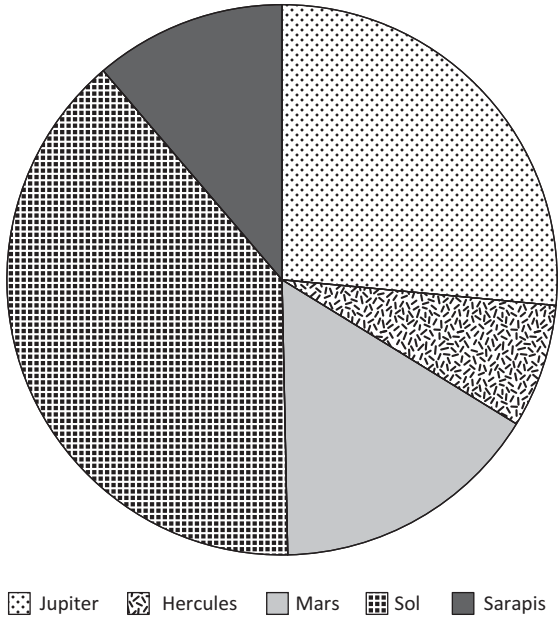

Fig. 9 Deities on the coin types of Maximinus (n=139)

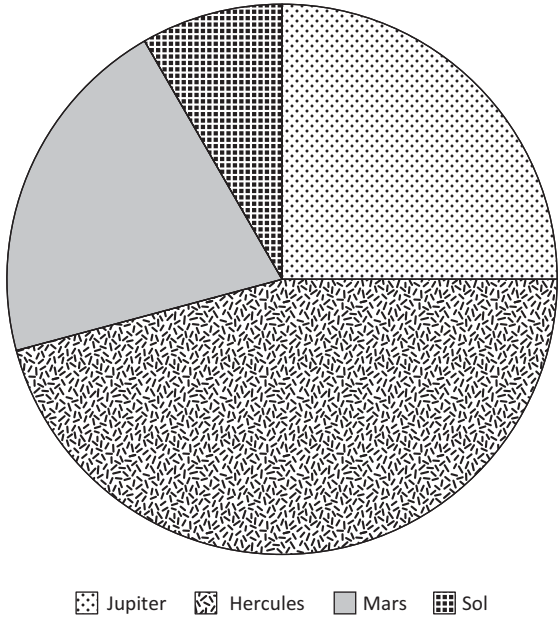

Fig. 10 Deities on the coin types of Severus II (n=24)

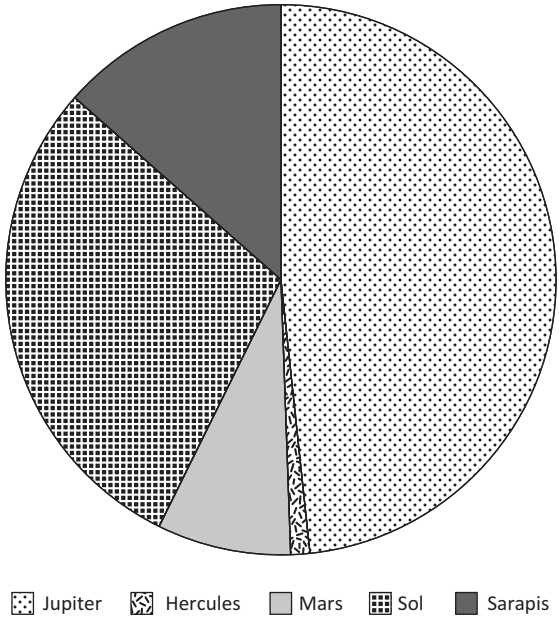

Fig. 11 Deities on the coin types of Licinius (n=79)

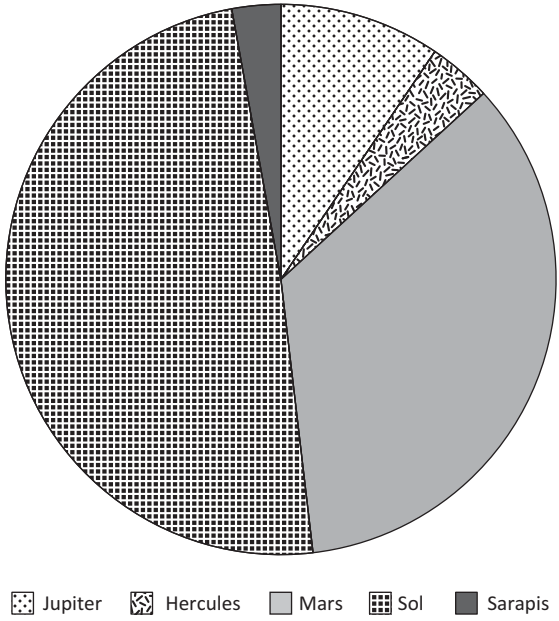

Fig. 12 Deities on the coin types of Constantine (n=345)

Maximinus Daia and Constantine mark the exceptions; on their coins, Sol is the most prominent deity.

Coins and the Great Persecution

An analysis of the messages communicated through the reverses of coins issued between 284 and 313 highlights three peculiarities regarding the ideological picture in general and religious representation in particular:

1 The number of different messages was limited in comparison with earlier times. Regarding the general picture (all representational themes), fewer different messages were propagated on Tetrarchic coins than on coins issued in the previous century. The same goes for the number of different gods (religious representation) that figured on Tetrarchic coins compared with the display of gods on earlier third-century coins.
2 Comparable messages were propagated by the different Tetrarchic rulers. As for the general picture, few 'new' messages were communicated in the period 284–313; the Tetrarchs all made use of similar representational themes. In addition, regarding religious representation, Jupiter, Hercules, Mars and Sol figure on the coins of all Tetrarchs, Minerva only on the coins of the emperors of the first Tetrarchy and Sarapis only on the coins of the last Tetrarchs.
3 Patterns are visible in the emphasis that is laid on particular messages, especially regarding the coin types that were issued during the first Tetrarchy. As for the religious messages in particular, all Tetrarchs favoured one god in particular on their coins.

The messages on Tetrarchic coins thus clearly reveal a process of unification by means of structuralisation (patterns) and clarification (less variety).

Turning again to the Great Persecution, it seems that this event also fits into this particular context of unification. After all, the consecutive persecution edicts, each targeting a specific part of the Christian community (Christians of high status, the clergy, the Christian community as a whole), formed a structured attack on Christianity, thereby intending to reduce the number of (increasingly) important religious systems within the empire. Thus, in this way an attempt seems to have been made to bring about religious unity at an empire-wide level.[49] Other important aspects of the

[49] This goes against Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 65, who states that the pronouncement of separate edicts 'can be interpreted as evidence that the persecution was not going well – that each increasingly severe edict proves the failure of its predecessor'.

policy of the Tetrarchs could probably be seen in the same light, namely as creating (administrative/economic) unity through structuralisation and/or clarification. In the late 290s, the imperial authorities started with administrative reforms and a new territorial structure of the empire came into being.[50] Diocletian doubled the number of provinces by dividing large ones into smaller units and setting up administrative headquarters for each (new) province.[51] The clustering of provinces in dioceses, larger geographical entities superintended by *vicarii*, formed the next step.[52] These changes in administrative structures reflect the attempts to increase efficiency (for instance regarding the collection of taxes) and to strengthen central control within the empire as a whole, thus promoting unity.[53] In addition, by the issuance of the Edict of the Prices in 301 an attempt was made to check market forces by creating a new financial structure that fixed maximum prices within (parts of) the empire.[54] The Great Persecution, which started in 303, was chronologically in line with these administrative and economic measures and would have been the following step in the unification of a divided empire that was now ruled over by four different rulers.

The messages on Tetrarchic coins not only demonstrate the extent to which central co-ordination, that is consultation between the authorities in the different parts of the empire, must have taken place during this

[50] Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 25.

[51] J. Harries, *Imperial Rome, AD 284 to 363: The New Empire* (Edinburgh, 2012) 50.

[52] There is an ongoing debate on whether the creation of the dioceses was part of the Diocletianic reforms or whether Constantine created them around 314; for an overview of scholarship on Late Antiquity dioceses, see D. Slootjes, 'Late Antique Administrative Structures: On the Meaning of Dioceses and Their Borders in the Fourth Century AD', in L. Brice and D. Slootjes (eds.), *Aspects of Ancient Institutions and Geography: Studies in Honour of Richard J. A. Talbert* (Leiden, 2014) 177–95 at 177–80. A later dating of the dioceses, however, would not affect my argument, as it was Diocletian who doubled the number of provinces and thus initiated the process.

[53] Harries, *Imperial Rome*, 51.

[54] Corcoran, *Empire of the Tetrarchs*, 178–79. Earlier examples of maximum prices exist but the scale of this attempt was unprecedented; see Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 42. Copies of Diocletian's edict were found in five Eastern provinces; see Harries, *Imperial Rome*, 65–66. The long rhetorical preamble to the edict makes it clear that there was more behind its issuance than solely economic reasons, and the positioning of some inscriptions (e.g. high on the wall of the basilica of Aphrodisias) hints at the symbolic value of the edict; see H. Brandt, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit: Von Diokletian und Konstantin bis zum Ende der konstantinischen Dynastie (284–363)* (Berlin, 1998) 84; Harries, *Imperial Rome*, 66. According to Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, 42, the rhetorical preamble to the edict is often seen as proof 'for a weak grasp of economics' among the emperors.

particular period in Roman imperial history. Although specific measures must have been triggered by specific circumstances/events which cannot always be retrieved, the coins issued between 284 and 313 reveal the larger ideological framework in which (particular aspects of) Tetrarchic policy, such as the persecution of Christians, can be placed.[55]

[55] Since the Great Persecution resulted in the deaths of inhabitants of the empire, however, it is problematic to some extent to link the persecution to the administrative and economic reforms; the consequences of the Great Persecution cannot be compared with the effects of the other measures.

APPENDIX I

Messages Propagated on the Coin Types of Severus, Gallienus, Diocletian and Galerius

Septimius Severus	Gallienus
1. *Adventus*	1. *Abundantia*
2. *Aequitas*	2. *Adlocatio*
3. *Aeternitas*	3. *Adventus*
4. Africa	4. *Aequitas*
5. *Annona*	5. *Aeternitas*
6. Apollo	6. *Alacritas*
7. *Arcus*	7. *Annona*
8. *Augusti/Augustorum*	8. Apollo
9. Bacchus	9. *Bonus eventus*
10. *Bonus eventus*	10. *Clementia*
11. Caracalla	11. *Cohors praetoria*
12. Ceres	12. *Concordia*
13. *Concordia*	13. *Deo Augusto*
14. *Consecration*	14. Diana
15. *Dii patri*	15. *Dona*
16. *Dis auspicibus*	16. *Fecunditas*
17. ET IA II	17. *Felicitas*
18. *Felicitas*	18. *Fides*
19. *Fides*	19. *Fortuna*
20. *Fortuna*	20. *Genius*
21. *Frugiferum*	21. Hercules
22. *Fundator pacis*	22. *Indulgentia*
23. *Genius*	23. *Invictus*
24. Geta	24. Janus
25. Hercules	25. Juno
26. *Indulgentia*	26. Jupiter
27. *Invicto imp (tropaea)*	27. *Juventus*
28. Julia Domna	28. *Laetitia*
29. Juno	29. Legions
30. Jupiter	30. Liber
31. *Justitia*	31. *Liberalitas*
32. *Laetitia*	32. *Libertas*
33. Legions	33. Mars
34. *Libertas*	34. Mercurius

(*cont.*)

35. *Liberalitas*	35. Minerva
36. Mars	36. *Moneta*
37. Minerva	37. Neptunus
38. *Moneta*	38. *Ob* series
39. *Munificentia*	39. *Oriens*
40. *Nobilitas*	40. *Pacator orbis*
41. *Pacator orbis*	41. *Pax*
42. *Pax*	42. *Perpetuitatis*
43. *Pietas*	43. *Pietas*
44. *Profectio*	44. *Princeps iuventutis*
45. *Providentia*	45. *Providentia*
46. *Pudicitia*	46. *Pudicitia*
47. *Rector orbis*	47. *Restitutor*
48. *Restitutor urbis*	48. *Roma Aeterna*
49. *Roma aeterna*	49. *Saeculares*
50. *Saecularia*	50. Salonina
51. *Salus*	51. *Salus*
52. *Securitas*	52. SC
53. *Spes*	53. *Securitas*
54. *SPQR optimo principi*	54. Siscia
55. *Tellus*	55. Sol
56. Titulature Severus	56. *Spes*
57. *Urbs Roma*	57. *SPQR*
58. Venus	58. *SPQR optimo principi*
59. *Victoria*	59. Titulature Gallienus
60. *Virtus*	60. *Uberitas*
61. *Vota*	61. Venus
	62. Vesta
	63. *Victoria*
	64. *Virtus*
	65. *Vota*
	66. Vulcan

Diocletian	Galerius
1. *Abundantia*	1. *Abundantia*
2. *Adventus*	2. *Adventus*
3. *Aequitas*	3. *Aeternitas*
4. *Aeternitas*	4. AVSPIC FEL
5. *Annona*	5. *Claritas*
6. AVSPIC FEL	6. *Comitatus*
7. *Claritas*	7. *Concordia*
8. *Clementia*	8. *Felicitas*
9. *Comitatus*	9. *Fides*
10. *Concordia*	10. *Fortuna*
11. Constantius	11. *Genius*
12. *Fatis/es victribus*	12. Hercules
13. *Felicitas*	13. Jupiter

(*cont.*)

14. *Fides*	14. *Laetitia*
15. *Fortuna*	15. Mars
16. *Gaudete Romani*[a]	16. *Memoria*
17. *Genius*	17. Minerva
18. Hercules	18. *Moneta*
19. Jupiter	19. *Oriens*
20. Jupiter and Hercules	20. *Pax*
21. *Laetitia*	21. *Pietas*
22. Mars	22. *Praesidia Reipublicae*
23. Maximian	23. *Princeps iuventutis*
24. Minerva	24. *Providentia*
25. *Moneta*	25. *Salus*
26. *Oriens*	26. *Salus* and Carthago
27. *Pacatores gentium*	27. *Securitas*
28. *Pax*	28. Sol
29. *Pietas*	29. Titulature Galerius
30. *Providentia*	30. *Ubique victores*
31. *Providentia* and *Quies*	31. *Victoria*
32. *Quies*	32. *Virtus*
33. *Roma aeterna*	33. *Vota*
34. *Saeculares*	34. XCVI
35. *Salus*	35. *Utilitas*
36. *Salus* and Carthago	
37. *Securitas*	
38. Sol	
39. Titulature Diocletian	
40. *Victoria*	
41. *Virtus*	
42. XCVI	
43. *Utilitas*	
44. *Vota*	
45. *Vota* and Jupiter	
46. *Vota*, Jupiter and titulature Diocletian	

[a] Coin types bearing the legend GAVDETE ROMANI are linked to *vota*-types through the image of two Victoriae holding a tablet inscribed with SIC XX SIC XXX. Yet, the legend clearly propagates a broader message and the types are therefore counted separately.

APPENDIX 2

Messages on the Coin Types of the Tetrarchs, 284–313

	Diocletian	Maximian	Galerius	Constantius I	Severus II	Maximinus Daia	Licinius	Constantine
Abundantia	x	x	x					
Adventus	x	x	x	x				x
Aequitas	x	x						
Aeternitas	x	x	x					
Annona	x							
AVGG				x				x
AVSPIC FEL	x	x	x	x				
Carthago	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Claritas	x	x	x	x				
Clementia	x	x						
Co-rulers	x							
Comitatus	x	x	x	x				
Concordia	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Consecratio				x				
Conservator (emperor)		x						x
Dioscuri				x				
Fatis/es victribus	x	x						
Felicitas	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Fides	x	x	x	x	x			
Fortuna	x	x	x	x				
Gaudium	x	x						x
Genius	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Gloria exercitus Galliarum								x
Hercules	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Jupiter	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Laetitia	x		x	x				
Liberator urbis suae								x
Mars	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Memoria		x	x	x				
Minerva	x	x	x	x				
Moneta	x	x	x	x	x	x		x

(*cont.*)

	Diocletian	Maximian	Galerius	Constantius I	Severus II	Maximinus Daia	Licinius	Constantine
Nobilissimus caesar						x		
Oriens	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Pacatores	x	x		x				
Pax	x	x	x	x				x
Perpetuitas					x	x		x
Pietas	x	x	x	x				
Plures natales felices		x						x
Praesidia reipublicae			x	x				
Princeps iuventutis			x	x	x	x	x	x
Profectio							x	
Providentia	x	x	x	x				
Quies	x	x						
Redditor lucis aeternae				x				
Restitutor						x		x
Roma	x	x		x		x		x
Saeculares	x	x						
Salus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[a]
Securitas	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Sol	x		x		x	x	x	x
Spes								x
SPQR optimo principi						x	x	x
Titulature	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Utilitas publica	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Victor(es)		x	x	x		x	x	x
Victoria	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Virtus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Vota	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
XCVI	x	x	x	x				

[a] Only in combination with Carthago.

CHAPTER 9

The Violent Legacy of Constantine's Militant Piety

Elizabeth DePalma Digeser

Introduction

It should shock us – and it would have shocked a number of early fourth-century Christians – that the Emperor Constantine (306–37) continued a seventy-five-year long tradition of soldier-emperors' militant piety from the time he took power,[1] into the period of his conversion to Christianity, and up to the end of his reign. For the ease with which Constantine promoted the novel image of a *Christian* military commandant, I argue, we have Lactantius (fl. 299–315) to thank. In his *Divine Institutes*, this African professor of rhetoric set out the template for Constantine as the ideal Christian conqueror-emperor and violent avenger of evil. As Lactantius identified this 'evil' as the actions of polytheistic emperors who had persecuted Christians, his template envisions the emperor as an agent of religious violence in response to religious violence. However comprehensible Lactantius' response, this image is wildly at odds with the previous conception of the Christian hero, that of the martyr, known for enduring, not promoting, violence. Taking inspiration from the circumstances of Constantine's accession, Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* sketched the outline of a Christian sovereign. That the mutually exclusive images of how the good Christian and the good emperor should respond to religious violence never resulted in cognitive dissonance for Constantine's Christian subjects is thanks to this artful construction. The longevity of this image is chilling testimony to its success: it was uniquely suited to the variegated religious topography of northern Gaul, the regional quadrant where Constantine first ruled and home to his capital, Trier.

[1] I am drawing the term, 'militant piety', from T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009).

Images of Christians and Emperors

Before the year 306 CE, Christians living in the Roman empire were, so far as our sources suggest, the targets not the perpetrators of religious violence. Indeed from its earliest conception the image of the martyr presented the true, heroic Christian as stubbornly resisting the force of the state and enduring violence patiently as a result.[2] When Christians contemplated vengeance, as did the first-century author of Revelation, they imagined the earthly return of Christ in a future time, as a divine warrior who, having conquered death, could defeat sin, evil and tyranny.[3] He would thus inaugurate a new age when men and women might finally become divine. These two images, the martyr as enduring contemporary, state-inflicted religious violence and the resurrected Christ as the future armed avenger against those who had engaged in religious violence, fit Christians as a sometimes victimised minority population of citizens within the Roman empire, especially during times of persecution, such as that raging at the time of Constantine's accession.[4]

Conversely, at the cusp of the fourth century, Roman emperors were most definitely the perpetrators of violence, however they and their subjects might have justified their behaviour. In the face of frequent usurpations and cross-border predations, the empire's sovereigns presented themselves as emperors in arms, wielding violence with the help of a divine companion: militant piety in order to conquer tyrant usurpers and the evils of barbarian raids.[5] Starting in 303, the imperial Tetrarchy had also invoked militant piety to justify raising their swords against their Christian citizens. And although they attacked Christian practice more violently in the East, both Western emperors who preceded Constantine (his father, Constantius, and Maximian) had imposed the first edict disenfranchising

[2] E.g. L. Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (London, 2004); S. Krauter, 'The Martyrdom of Stephen', in J. Engberg et al. (eds.), *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom* (Bern, 2011) 45–74; C. R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, 2012), and 'Nailing Down and Tying Up: Lessons in Intertextual Impossibility from the "Martyrdom of Polycarp"', *VChr* 67 (2013) 117–36.

[3] The term 'divine warrior' comes from D. A. Thomas, *Revelation 19 in Historical and Mythological Context* (New York, 2008) 6; for second- and third-century Christian views of Revelation, see G. Aulén, *Christus Victor* (London, 1950) 60; E. Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (London, 2013), esp. pp. 111, 162.

[4] For the image of the martyr as a victim of imperially sanctioned violence in a later context, fifth- and sixth-century Syria, see Chapter 15 by Shepardson, this volume.

[5] Cf. S. Berrens, *Sonnenkult und Kaisertum von den Severern bis zu Constantin I. (193–337 n. Chr.)* (Stuttgart, 2004).

Christian citizens, razing churches and apprehending Scripture.[6] These are the prevailing imperial images of religious violence that the Emperor Constantine inherited when his dead father's soldiers raised him to the purple.

Before the rise of Constantine, Christians were ambivalent about whether they should engage in violence at all, in particular through military service.[7] Although Christians did serve in the army,[8] and theologians maintained their loyalty to a state that sometimes had to defend itself,[9] writers such as Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus of Lyon and Origen professed an alternative view of Christians who 'willingly gave themselves over to martyrdom'.[10] By the mid-third century, Origen declared that Scripture forbade Christians from military service.[11] And although Church orders show Christians to have been divided on the acceptability of army service among their number, they do affirm the use of violence, namely killing, as a greater moral problem than idolatry.[12]

We thus take for granted the ease with which Constantine became the first Christian emperor. Granted, we will never have access to the private reckonings of his subjects, but in the surviving early fourth-century Christian sources there is no hint that his professing to be a Christian – and most emphatically a conquering general – ever caused any of his sect the slightest consternation.[13] Certain North African Christians led by

[6] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.2.4 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 742), on which see W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford, 2000) 4; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, 'Aspects of the "Great" Persecution', repr. and updated in his *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Oxford, 2006) 35–78 at 38; E. Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, 2012) 58. On the Great Persecution, see also Bremmer, pp. 61–62, Rives, pp. 200–201, and esp. Chapter 8 by Manders, all this volume.

[7] J. D. Charles, 'Pacifists, Patriots, or Both? Second Thoughts on Pre-Constantinian Early-Christian Attitudes toward Soldiering and War', *Logos* (2010) 17–55, esp. p. 46. See also his review of P. J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL, 2010), in *Journal of Church and State* (2014) 189–206, esp. pp. 190–91 (n. 1), which surveys the literature on this topic.

[8] J. Helgeland, 'Christians and the Roman Army, AD 173–337', *ChHist* 43 (1974) 149–63, 200.

[9] L. Swift, 'War and the Christian Conscience I: The Early Years', in *ANRW* II.23.1 (1979) 835–68 at 836 (n. 2), cited in Charles, 'Pacifists, Patriots, or Both?', 46, 54 (n. 97).

[10] G. Demacopoulos, 'The Eusebian Valorization of Violence and Constantine's Wars for God', in A. E. Siecienski and H. Pappas (eds.), *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy* (London, 2017) 115–128 at 116.

[11] Ibid., 116.

[12] A. Kreider, 'Military Service in the Church Orders', *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31 (2003) 415–42.

[13] Helgeland, 'Christians and the Roman Army', 200; Demacopoulos, 'Eusebian Valorization'. The exigencies of textual preservation aside, one might have expected something like the varied responses to the forty-fifth President of the United States who claims to advance the cause of conservative Christians. See most recently, M. Gerson, 'How Evangelicals Lost Their Way and Got Hooked by Donald Trump', *The Atlantic* (April 2018) 42–53.

Donatus pushed back against Constantine, not because they rejected his image as a militant Christian sovereign, but because he supported bishops whose legitimacy they rejected in a conflict that pre-dated the emperor's conversion.[14] Indeed, Constantine's example was so potent that Gregory of Tours used it as a model for Clovis, first Christian king of the Franks.[15] Among Protestants who came to see as tainted the character of fourth-century Christianity, the emperor's intervention in Church doctrine and administration drew their criticism, more than the emperor's embrace of military violence.[16] Even England's Henry VIII turned to Constantine as a model of divine right rule.[17]

Constantine's image as a militant Christian sovereign has worked so seamlessly that contemporary scholarship has not considered how jarring a change it might have been for Christian self-presentation overall.[18] If modern historians have questioned Constantine's Christianity, it is either because they suspected that his conversion was but a political ploy or because they wonder about the character of the Christianity he adopted.[19] Most recent scholarship is willing to grant the sincere character of the emperor's Christian piety,[20] while questions continue to swirl about the emperor's orthodoxy.[21] For the most part, these latter concerns involve Constantine's engagement with solar worship.[22] No one, to the best of my knowledge, has found problematic the emperor's militant piety.

Lactantius' Portrayal of Constantine

That we accept as natural the idea of a Christian soldier-emperor is due to the skill of Lactantius.[23] His *Divine Institutes* succeeded in crafting such a powerfully enduring image of the Christian sovereign not only because it ably married the two strains of Christian thought about violence, that of the

[14] See B. D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011) 66–70.
[15] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 2.27–43 (*MGH SRM* 1.1, pp. 71–94).
[16] For a modern articulation of the view that Constantine's embrace of power corrupted the Church, see J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, 1994).
[17] D. Hoak, *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1995) 70–74; D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, 1996) 278. I am much obliged to Avery Barbosa for these references.
[18] See e.g. T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA, 1981); H. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, 2000); N. Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics* (Philadelphia, 2016).
[19] J. Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantin's des Grossen* (Basel, 1853); Drake, *Constantine*.
[20] Lenski, *Constantine*. [21] H. A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine* (Cambridge, 1976).
[22] J. Bardill, *Constantine: Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2012).
[23] Demacapoulos, 'Eusebian Valorization', argues that this idea starts later with Eusebius.

martyr and that of the avenging redeemer. Lactantius' image also drew deeply on pre-existing ideas about the divine and its relationship to imperial power that had long flourished in the region that Constantine first governed. My previous work discusses the significance of Lactantius' concept of forbearance – endurance or *patientia* – as a quality that a Christian sovereign should deploy when engaging with citizens whose religious practices he rejects.[24] Constantine not only was receptive to Lactantius' thinking, but also willingly implemented some of his ideas as religious policy.[25] In the present chapter, I discuss how Lactantius' conception of Constantine as embodying the heavenly warrior of the Book of Revelation not only serves as a template for the first Christian emperor, but is also uniquely well suited for the emperor in his first domain. After showing how the *Divine Institutes* imagines Constantine, the Christian sovereign, as heavenly warrior, I will explore the extent to which it harmonised with pre-existing Gallic expectations about the divine and imperial militant piety.

A superb rhetorician, deeply familiar with both the North African Christian tradition and the Platonist cultural currents responsible for the persecution,[26] Lactantius was especially well suited to promote a public image of Constantine. Before journeying to Trier, ostensibly to tutor Constantine's son Crispus,[27] Lactantius had resided in Nicomedia, where the Emperor Diocletian (284–305), the Tetrarchy's founder, had summoned him from Africa to teach rhetoric, probably around 299.[28] Lactantius had remained there through the persecution's first two years, from 303 to 305.[29] For most of this period, Constantine had also resided at the Nicomedian court,[30] and so it is fair to assume that the two men had become acquainted. By 306, Constantine had succeeded his father, Constantius, ruling the north-west quadrant of the empire from Trier. Between

[24] In a future study I will discuss how this image helps to gender Christian leadership as male.

[25] E. D. Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca, 2000); K. M. Girardet, *Die Konstantinische Wende* (Darmstadt, 2006) 41–155; E. Heck, 'Constantin und Lactanz in Trier – Chronologisches', *Historia* 58 (2009) 118–30 at 128; Bardill, *Constantine*, 140; Lenski, *Constantine*, 255.

[26] E. D. Digeser, 'Lactantius, Eusebius and Arnobius: Evidence for the Causes of the Great Persecution', in F. Young, M. Edwards and P. Parvis (eds.), *Studia Patristica XXXIX* (Leuven, 2006) 33–46.

[27] Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 80 (pp. 42–43 Richardson); E. D. Digeser, 'Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles: Dating the *Divine Institutes*', *JECS* 2 (1994) 33–52.

[28] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 5.2.2 (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 403).

[29] Ibid., 5.11.15 (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 435).

[30] T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA, 1982) 24. Constantine mentions seeing fire in the palace in 303 in *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum* 25 (*GCS* 7.1, pp. 190–92).

306 and 310, as the persecution raged in the East, Lactantius wrote the *Divine Institutes*.[31] The work survives in two editions, one tradition of which bears lengthy dedications to Constantine in Books 1 and 7. Allusions in the first dedication date it to 310, the second to 313. The three-year difference between the dedications suggests that Lactantius read this work aloud in Trier over this period.[32]

The dedications in the *Divine Institutes* not only suggest that Lactantius presented them orally over several years, but the one in the first book also paints a portrait of Constantine in 310. Delivered probably at Trier's still impressive basilica,[33] Lactantius' first book addresses Constantine.

[31] Most scholars (e.g. Barnes, *New Empire*, 34; S. Freund, *Laktanz, Divinae institutiones. Buch 7: De vita beata* [Berlin, 2009] 5) take Lactantius' statement that he witnessed the arrest of a man, two years into the persecution (*Divinae institutiones* 5.11.15 [*CSEL* 19.1, p. 435]), to indicate that he did not begin the work before 305. I posit that he conceived the seven books as a whole, given the symmetry of the work. As I argue in 'Persecution and the Art of Writing between the Lines', *RBPh* 92 (2014) 167–85, Book 7 is aware of Constantine's accession in 306. Thus, this year is the *terminus post quem*. Maximian's execution in July 310 (*Panegyrici Latini* 6.14.5) is the *terminus ante quem* since Book 7 treats all the persecuting emperors, save him, as still living. Most scholars assume that Lactantius wrote the work in Nicomedia or in North Africa (e.g. Heck, 'Constantin', 121). I think it more likely that he wrote it in Trier.

[32] Digeser, 'Lactantius and Constantine's Letter'. Although this argument has been widely accepted (see Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*, 41–155 and Bardill, *Constantine*, 140), R. Cicatello, 'Le dediche di Lattanzio a Costantino: problema di cronologia', *Seia* 10–11 (2005–2006) 89–103 and Heck, 'Constantin' reject it. The evidence for the first dedication's date of 310 comes from the striking similarities between it and *Panegyrici Latini* 6 of the same year, discussed below. For Cicatello, the panegyric's assertion of a new kind of dynastic legitimacy for Constantine reflects local, not court, politics, but see C. E. V. Nixon and B. S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994) 212–17. Heck says that Lactantius cannot have been in Trier before 313, but nothing prevents him from having been earlier in the West. In addition to the arguments I set out in 1994, the character of the work makes it more likely that Lactantius presented it soon after its completion.

[33] D. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford, 2013) 127; Digeser, 'Lactantius and Constantine's Letter'. Lenski, *Constantine*, 31–32, drawing on T. Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus: Herrschaftspropaganda in der zeitgenössischen Überlieferung* (Stuttgart, 1990), doubts that Lactantius could call Constantine *imperator maxime* before 312, but people in Gaul did not feel bound to observe their emperor's technically subordinate position to those in the East. For example, Gallic inscriptions highlight Constantine's descent from Constantius and relationship to his father-in-law, Maximian, but there is no hint of the Herculian family connection devised by Diocletian in the East. See Grünewald, *Constantinus*, 18–19 (n. 40) and R. Westall, 'Genealogie costantiniane', in A. Melloni (ed.), *Costantino I: Enciclopedia costantiniana. Sulla figura e l'immagine del cosidetto editto di Milano 313–2013*, vol. 1 (Rome, 2013) 1–17 at 6, who says that the difference in tone between these inscriptions in territory subject to Constantine and those in other regions is noteworthy. The same trend is observable on coinage minted in regions subject to Constantine. It is also worth noting that the agreement that the emperors had reached at Carnuntum in 308 established their families under the auspices of Sol Invictus Mithras, although Constantine refused to accept the title *filius augustorum* that their 'agreement' had determined (*ILS* 659 = *CIL* III 4415: *D(eo) S(oli) I(nvicto) M(ithrae) fautori imperii sui Jovii et Herculii religiosissimi Augusti et Caesares sacrarium restituerunt*). See also S. Corcoran, 'Grappling with the Hydra: Co-ordination and Conflict in the Management of Tetrarchic Succession', in G. Bonamente, N. Lenski and R. Lizzi Testa (eds.),

'Greatest emperor (*imperator maxime*)', Lactantius says, 'you were the first of Roman emperors to repudiate falsehood and first to know and honour the greatness of the one true God'. Because you restored justice, he says, 'God will grant you happiness, virtue and long life . . . and [you will] hand on the guardianship in the name of Rome to your children as you received it from your father'.[34] Lactantius flatters Constantine as the greatest emperor, even though he was more junior than the Eastern Tetrarchs, Galerius and Maximinus Daia. Completely ignoring the complex family relationships that existed with the Eastern rulers, Lactantius positions Constantine firmly within a traditional dynastic succession, starting with his father, Constantius, and carrying through his children.[35] Divine providence has destined the emperor for a long reign. Reading Lactantius' claim that Constantine 'restored justice' against his *De mortibus persecutorum* (24) suggests that Constantine 'repudiated falsehood' and honoured 'the greatness of the one true God' by rescinding upon his accession the edicts of persecution issued in 303. But, as I will explain below, 'restoring justice' may also be an allusion to Virgil's Fourth Eclogue.

The first six books of the *Divine Institutes* comprise a brilliantly sophisticated project that imagines a Christian *res publica* under a Christian sovereign. Careful and clever allusions throughout this work allow us to read it as a manifesto for sole monarchy and the worship of one God, in order to bring on the Golden Age where divine law (that is, the teachings of Christ) would inspire Roman law.[36] Although Lactantius looked forward to a future when all Romans would be Christians, until that time, he advocated an imperial policy of forbearance (*patientia*) towards religious difference.[37] Until the end of Book 6 (*De vero cultu*), an astute reader might imagine that Lactantius was addressing Constantine, his dedicatee, as an emperor who might hypothetically be receptive to Christianity.

Lactantius' apocalyptic Book 7,[38] however, presents Constantine as the embodiment of the divine warrior, Christ, foretold in the Book of

Costantino prima e dopo Costantino/Constantine before and after Constantine (Bari, 2012) 3–15 at 11: 'From [307 on], in his own territory at least, Constantine regarded himself as a full Augustus'; Lenski, *Constantine*, 31.

[34] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 1.1.13–14 (*CCSL* 19.1, p. 4); all translations are from A. Bowen and P. Garnsey, *Lactantius, Divine Institutes* (Liverpool, 2003), slightly modified.

[35] The Tetrarchy, conversely, depended on co-option. See Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 18 (pp. 26–30 Creed).

[36] Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire*; Bardill, *Constantine*.

[37] Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire*, 91–143 (Chs. 4–5).

[38] Apart from people who have edited it and provided line-by-line commentaries (e.g. Freund, *Laktanz*), O. Nicholson, 'Constantine's Vision of the Cross', *VChr* 54 (2000) 309–23 is the only author I know who has tried to figure out what it means.

Revelation. His representation hinges on a famous interval in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, the forty-two months between the rise of the Antichrist and the advent of divine rule on earth.[39] It just so happens that forty-two months – as the Romans counted – separated the first edict of persecution (23 February 303) from Constantine's accession (25 July 306).[40] Just before the persecution, the prominent Platonist philosopher Porphyry of Tyre had attacked Christian claims that the Book of Daniel predicted Christ's Second Coming forty-two months after the rise of the Antichrist.[41] Lactantius was aware of a range of attacks on Christian Scripture, including Porphyry's.[42] At the Nicomedian court, Lactantius certainly knew the dates of Diocletian's edicts and Constantine's accession. The contemporary controversy around the interpretation of Daniel and other apocalyptic texts would have primed him to see the forty-two months between the outbreak of persecution and Constantine's accession as transcendentally significant, heralding the dawn of a new Christian age. In short, Lactantius inferred that, achieving power forty-two months after the outbreak of persecution, Constantine must be the avenging warrior whom the author of Revelation saw delivering the persecuted from their oppressor. Buoyed by this inspiration and distraught by the criticisms levied against Christianity before the persecution, Lactantius wrote the seven-volume *Divine Institutes* in response.[43]

By the time he presented the first book of the *Divine Institutes* at Trier in 310, Lactantius had written the seventh book, the middle of which presents – allusively – Constantine as God's 'deliverer'. 'At darkest midnight', Lactantius writes, 'heaven's center (*caelum medium*) will open, so that the light of God descending (*lumen descendentis Dei*) is visible throughout the world like lightning (*fulgur*)'.[44] Lactantius has already foreshadowed this event in the previous chapter with testimonies from Hermes Trismegistus (who foresees the one god purifying the earth with fire) and the sun god Apollo's priestess, the Sibyl, who says that 'God will

[39] Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:1–6, 13:3–5. See also Porphyry in Jerome, *Commentarium in Danielem* 4.12.7a–b (*CCSL* 75A, pp. 940–42) for Daniel 12:7.
[40] Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 12, 24 (pp. 18–20, 36–38 Creed).
[41] Porphyry's critique survives in Jerome's argument against it in *Commentarium in Danielem* pr. (*CCSL* 75A, p. 772).
[42] Diocletian's imperial official, Hierocles, had also argued that Scripture could not support Christian claims to Christ's divinity (Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 5.2.12–3.9 [*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 405–406]). For Lactantius' and other Christians' awareness of Porphyry's critique, see Digeser, 'Lactantius, Eusebius and Arnobius'.
[43] See Digeser, 'Persecution and the Art' for a detailed exposition of the argument.
[44] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 7.19.2 (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 644).

send a king from the sun'.[45] Lest one doubt that his subject is the Second Coming, Lactantius links the night the heavens opened to the Resurrection: that night, Lactantius notes, 'has a double meaning'. On one night 'he regained life after his passion, and on another he will regain his kingship of the earth'.[46] Before God's light descends, Lactantius continues, 'a sword (*gladius*) will fall from the sky (*ex caelo*)'. So armed, the divine warrior will kill his enemy host 'from the third hour till evening, and blood will flow in torrents. When all his forces have been destroyed, only the impious one will escape'. Finally, Lactantius asserts, 'in the fourth war' the Antichrist 'will pay the penalty for his wickedness. Then the other princes and tyrants who have devastated the world will be imprisoned and brought before the king'. The warrior king will then 'condemn them and deliver them to be punished'.[47]

This entire chapter 19 of Book 7 echoes Revelation 19:11–21, especially the heavens opening, the heavenly legions, the advent of a sword, and the bloody battles against the beast and kings. It also draws substantially on Matthew 24:27, where Jesus describes the Second Coming, and Luke 1:78–79 in which Christ brings the Golden Age.[48] Only in Lactantius' apocalyptic, however, is the suggestion that the Antichrist will be ultimately defeated in the fourth war. I take this novelty to signal Lactantius' own prediction that the heavenly king will in the future defeat the four remaining persecuting emperors.[49] In sum, we have the picture of the light of God – whom '*we* call Christ (*nos Christum vocamur*)' – come to earth in arms in the person of Constantine, who accepted the imperial sword from his dying father. Lactantius foresees him, inspired by this divine agency, conquering evil, in the persons of the persecuting Tetrarchs.[50] By the end

[45] Ibid., 7.18.4, 7 (*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 641–43).

[46] V. Loi, *Lattanzio* (Zurich, 1970) 248; Nicholson, 'Constantine's Vision', 319; Pagels, *Revelations*, 6.

[47] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 7.19.3–7 (*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 645–46).

[48] A. Y. Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, 1976); Bardill, *Constantine*, 327.

[49] Nicholson, 'Constantine's Vision', 318–19, suggests that Lactantius' text alludes to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, the fourth battle of the war between Constantine and Maxentius. If Lactantius had completed Book 7 by the summer of 310, however, he is more likely to be anticipating the defeat of Constantine's four imperial colleagues, Galerius, Maximinus Daia, Licinius and Maxentius. Diocletian retired in 305 and would presumably not be taking up arms; Maximian had just died (see n. 31 above). The text may, in fact, look forward to engaging with Maxentius in Rome at 7.25.7.

[50] The Zoroastrian prophet Hystaspes agrees, Lactantius notes, saying that Jupiter will destroy the impious. 'All that is true', Lactantius avers, 'except he said Jupiter would do what God will do' (*Divinae institutiones* 7.18.2 [*CSEL* 19.1, p. 640]). A future study will further analyse this comment against the many giant columns of a mounted Apolline-Jupiter in Gaul. See P. Lambrechts, 'La colonne du dieu-cavalier au géant et le culte des sources en Gaule', *Latomus* 8 (1949) 145–58; A. Le

of Book 7, Lactantius has even brought in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue as prophetic, saying that 'This will be the time for all those things to happen that the poets claimed for the golden age when Saturn was king'.[51] Thinking they were describing past or contemporary events, they were, he says, really predicting the future reign of Christ.[52]

Imagining Constantine imbued with the spirit of the resurrected Christ and pairing the Second Coming with Easter, as he does at 7.19.4, allows Lactantius to move past the image of the soldier convert enduring the violence of martyrdom rather than killing other human beings.[53] Instead he integrates the two images of Christian heroism, martyr and victor, in one imperial person. Just as martyrs such as Polycarp, enduring religious violence, embodied Christ on the cross during their passion,[54] so the emperor ought to endure the errors of his subjects with patience. Just as the risen Christ was prophesied to be victor over death, sin and tyranny, so the emperor, inaugurated forty-two months after the onset of persecution and embodying Him, will wage a violent religious triumph over the persecuting emperors. As 'the cross was the meaningful symbol of the victory of Christ over the powers of darkness and death',[55] it is not surprising that this symbol of religious violence *par excellence* became Constantine's saving sign in Lactantius' later account of the emperor's victory over Maxentius.[56]

Lactantius' image of Constantine as embodying the spirit of Christ unconquered by death is a brilliant reconception of the Roman sovereign in a manner that speaks to both Christian and pagan subjects and Gauls in particular. I will discuss both audiences in turn. On the Christian side,

Martret, 'L'enclos d'une colonne de Jupiter à Bavilliers (Territoire de Belfort)?', *RAE* 62 (2013) 187–210.

[51] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 7.24.9 (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 660).

[52] Ibid., 7.24.11 (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 661), citing Virgil, *Eclogues* 4.28–45. For recent scholarship on Lactantius' use of Virgil, see G. Bernardi Perini, 'Virgilio, il Cristo, la Sibilla: sulla lettura "messianica" della quarta egloga', *AAPat* 112 (1999–2000) 115–24; A. V. Nazzaro, '*Quatenus P. Vergilius Maro Christianus necnon quidam Christi propheta habitus atque renuntiatus sit*', *RAL* 9 (2013) 13–40.

[53] For accounts of contemporary soldier martyrs, see Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.14 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 668; Marinus); *Acta Maximiliani* (pp. 244–49 Musurillo); *Acta Marcelli* (pp. 250–59 Musurillo); together with H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972) i–vii, which includes cautionary remarks regarding the historicity of these accounts. Further discussion exists in Helgeland, 'Christians', 158–59 and P. Brock, 'Why Did St. Maximilian Refuse to Serve in the Roman Army?', *JEH* 45 (1994) 195–209.

[54] *Passio Polycarpi* 13.3 (p. 12 Musurillo); Moss, 'Nailing Down'.

[55] I. Gillman, 'Constantine the Great in the Light of the Christus Victor Concept', *JRH* 1 (1961) 197–205 at 200.

[56] Lactantius' description of the sign with which the emperor adorned his army's shields is that of the staurogram. See most recently, Lenski, *Constantine*, 9–11.

Lactantius recognises that the contemporary model of the ideal Christian, that of the martyr, who suffers death rather than betray his *sacramentum* to Christ,[57] is unsuitable for an emperor who – he hopes – will wage war against his colleagues complicit in the persecution. In hoping for this kind of salvation, turning to the Book of Revelation, and imagining Constantine in the guise of Christ, Lactantius invokes 'the leading soteriology of the Patristic era'.[58] As set out by Gustav Aulén, this 'classic' view of soteriology 'dominates the whole of Greek Patristic theology', beginning with the Gallic bishop, Irenaeus of Lyon.[59] It posits the 'idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory'. In this view, just as Lactantius indicated in Book 7 of the *Divine Institutes*, Christ 'fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of this world, the "tyrants" under whom mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself'.[60] Noting the presence of this soteriology, not only in Lactantius, but also his predecessors and contemporaries,[61] Aulén describes it as seeing 'the work of Christ' as 'the overcoming of death *and* sin', a victory over the former because it is a triumph over the latter. Moreover, Christ's victory 'is the starting point for His present work in the world of men, where He, through his spirit, ever triumphantly continues to break down sin's power and deify [humanity]'.[62]

It is important to note that Lactantius' soteriology not only made the shift from Christian martyr to Christian avenger. His fusing Constantine's image with that of Revelation's divine warrior would have resonated especially strongly within the Christian communities of Gaul. Historians usually ignore the role that Christianity played in Constantine's experience here because – we assume – there were few churches. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to ignore the depth and spread of Gallic Christianity. As early as the mid-second century, Lyon had a small Christian community, led by its bishop, Irenaeus.[63] Capital of the three provinces of Gaul, Lyon's culture was influential on the elites of the Gallic communities, who would have

[57] See C. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York, 2016) 75.
[58] Gillman, 'Constantine', 197.
[59] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 53, as quoted in Gillman, 'Constantine', 197.
[60] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 20, cited in Gillman, 'Constantine', 197.
[61] Origen, *De principiis* 3.2.1, 3.3.2–4 (*GCS* 22, pp. 244–46, 257–61); Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.38, 47 (*GCS* 2, pp. 162–63, 168–69), 6.45–46 (*GCS* 3, pp. 115–18); Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 1.42, 53, 65 (pp. 37, 48–49, 62–64 Marchesi); Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* 4.12 (*GCS* 23.1, pp. 169–70).
[62] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 8, cited in Gillman, 'Constantine', 198.
[63] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.4.1 (*GCS* NF 6.1, p. 432); Pagels, *Revelations*, 111–13.

travelled there annually for a festival and a midsummer political assembly. It was also an important commercial centre at the junction of the Saône and Rhône rivers and the nexus of imperial roads.[64] Whether or not Christianity spread further north thanks to its expression at Lyon, by the early fourth century there were also Christian bishops in Autun and Metz. In response to the Donatist controversy in Carthage, Constantine convened two episcopal meetings in 312. The first was at Rome in 313, the second at Arles in 314. In 313, nineteen bishops convened at Rome, of whom Constantine personally knew three from Gaul: Reticius of Autun, Maternus of Cologne and Marinus of Arles.[65] By 314, sixteen Gallic cities sent clergy to the council,[66] including twelve bishops in total and six from north-east Gaul. By 317, one of Autun's poets would dedicate his *Laudes Domini* to Constantine.[67]

Not only would these Gallic Christian communities have been generally receptive to Lactantius' message, his work casting Constantine as Revelation's heavenly warrior come to earth also drew deeply on the millenarianism of Irenaeus of Lyon,[68] whose writings are likely to have circulated among these same congregations.[69] Lactantius had not only read but also admired Irenaeus' scholarship.[70] As a priest, Irenaeus had travelled to

[64] Strabo 4.611.

[65] K. M. Girardet, 'Das Reichskonzil von Rom (313): Urteil, Einspruch, Folgen', *Historia* 41 (1992) 104–16 at 107 (n. 21); W. Eck, 'Eine historische Zeitenwende: Kaiser Constantins Hinwendung zum Christentum und die gallischen Bischöfe', in F. Schuller and H. Wolff (eds.), *Konstantin der Grosse: Kaiser einer Epochenwende* (Munich, 2007) 69–94, citing Optatus 1.23 (*SC* 412, pp. 222–24); Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 10.5.19 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 888); K. M. Girardet, *Der Kaiser und sein Gott* (Berlin, 2010) 45; Lenski, *Constantine*, 69. Constantine must have had a personal relationship with these bishops *before* sending them to deal with the Donatists: it certainly was not because of their expertise in African affairs. The first bishop of Trier known by name is Agricius, who attended the Council of Arles in 314, but not the 313 meeting in Rome. H. Merten, *Katalog der frühchristlichen Inschriften des Bischöflichen Dom- und Diözesanmuseums Trier* (Trier, 1990) 10: the list of bishops of Trier names three earlier bishops, Eucharius, Valerius and Maternus, bringing the city's apostolic succession back to apostolic times. The two former bishops may well be legendary; that the third is identified as Maternus is one reason for thinking that the Christian community of Trier may have had ties to Cologne before Agricius.

[66] *Conciliorum Galliae, tam editorum quam ineditorum, collectio, temporum ordine digesta, ab anno Christi 177 ad ann. 1563* (Paris, 1789) 103–106. The cities are Marseilles, Arles, Vienne, Valentia, Orange, Nice, Apt, Reims, Rouen, Autun, Lyon, Cologne, Gabala, Burdegalia, Trier and Eauze.

[67] Lenski, *Constantine*, 138.

[68] J. Daniélou, 'La typologie millénariste de la semaine dans le Christianisme primitive', *VChr* 2 (1948) 1–16, esp. p. 16.

[69] Although direct evidence is lacking, there is good reason to think so: note the information in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.4.1 (*GCS* NF 6.1, p. 432); Gauls also travelled to Lyon annually for political reasons.

[70] R. M. Grant, 'Patristica', *VChr* 3 (1949) 225–29 at 228. Lactantius' editor Samuel Brandt (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 196) has shown a clear dependency of Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 3.8.29 (*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 196–97) on Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* 2.28.2 (*SC* 294, pp. 270–72). Nearly eighty years have

Rome just before the outbreak of persecution in Lyon, the letter describing which Eusebius preserves in his *Church History*.[71] Quoting Revelation, this letter depicts Rome as the 'beast' threatening the Lyon martyrs.[72] Taking up this theme, Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* links the beast of Revelation with the Antichrist, and claims that he works through persecutors.[73] Like Lactantius, Irenaeus believed that the persecution his community had experienced was happening in fulfilment of Revelation's prophecies. Also like Lactantius, he ended his work maintaining that Revelation had foretold Christ's reign on earth when he would return 'from heaven in glory to fight and conquer the beast'.[74]

The way in which Lactantius framed his claim that the Emperor Constantine, embodying the spirit of the risen Christ, would conquer the reigning persecutors also would have sparked the attention of Gauls who understood divine intervention in forms other than Christian. The most powerful resonance would have occurred among devotees of solar cults, especially those of Sol Invictus and Mithras who counted many soldiers among their number. Although such a discussion would stray far beyond what this chapter can cover, the Augustan allusions throughout the *Divine Institutes* also speak directly to the deep connection that this region had with the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the Emperor Claudius in particular, thus reinforcing long-term associations with the imperial cult. After discussing how Lactantius' message might speak to these other Gallic audiences, the concluding section will discuss briefly the reception of Lactantius' work among later authors, and the significance of his project overall.

Constantine and the Gauls

The strongest parallels between Lactantius' conception of Constantine as the divine warrior and victor over injustice exist with a Gallic panegyric also presented before Constantine at Trier in 310.[75] Not only does this oration break Constantine's connection with the Tetrarchy, like Lactantius does. It also presents the emperor as god incarnate, destined to restore

elapsed since anyone explored the relationship between Lactantius' *Divinae institutiones* and the *Adversus haereses*.

[71] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.4.1 (*GCS* NF 6.1, p. 432). [72] Pagels, *Revelations*, 209 (n. 26).

[73] Irenaeus thus takes a step that the author of Revelation does not. See ibid., 113–14.

[74] Ibid., 111, 114, 162.

[75] *Panegyrici Latini* 6. All translations are from Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise*, 211–53; for a discussion of the manuscript, see pp. 3–5.

justice to the earth.[76] Ostensibly the orator, a professor from the rhetorical school at Autun, speaking probably at Trier's basilica,[77] celebrates the anniversary of Trier, the capital where he speaks.[78] But his agenda is also to bolster Constantine's legitimacy by underscoring his dynastic and divine claims. He does this at the beginning and the end of the oration. Gesturing towards the other emperors as he begins, but concentrating on Constantine, the orator says he wants to celebrate the 'divinity' of his family, informing his audience, 'most of whom are unaware', that the deified Claudius II is Constantine's ancestor through his father.[79] Since Constantine's father had ruled from Trier for thirteen years, this information is 'new' because it is possibly invented.[80] The reasons for the new ancestor emerge when the speaker alludes later to the 'seditious intrigues' of Constantine's father-in-law, Maximian, who had tried to resume power after retirement by bribing Constantine's troops.[81] Co-optive, adoptive family ties had reinforced the legitimacy, relationships and hierarchies of the emperors in the Tetrarchy, but Constantine had recently executed his imperial father-in-law. Thus, the orator now strengthens Constantine's dynastic over his Tetrarchic imperial lineage by emphasising the emperor's biological family and his resemblance to his father. The orator also sets him 'on the highest rung (*summo gradu*)' thanks to the 'sublimity of his birth (*ortus sui sublimitate*)', implicitly above the other emperors.[82]

Towards the end of the oration the orator makes a second move outside the structure of the Tetrarchy by presenting Constantine as a god incarnate – a move parallel to that which Lactantius makes in the *Divine Institutes*.

[76] The panegyric survives in a manuscript along with seven others, also authored by faculty at the Autun school. See E. Galletier, *Panégyriques latins* (Paris, 1949) for the textual transmission. Autun's inhabitants traced their ancestry back to the Aedui, among Julius Caesar's strongest allies (Caesar, *Gallic War* 1.33.2; *Panegyrici Latini* 5.2). See also W. S. Maguinness, 'Eumenius of Autun', *G&R* 21 (1952) 97–103 at 97. Livy (*Periochae* 61) preserves an even earlier treaty between Rome and the Aedui from 121 BCE. In gratitude, Augustus patronised the town whose Roman name was Augustodunum. Early in the first century CE, the city already had famous rhetorical schools (Tacitus, *Annals* 9.25.2; Maguinness, 'Eumenius', 97), which in turn nurtured a cultured population capable of appreciating not just Latin oratory but also Greek literature (M. Blanchard-Lemée, 'Épicure dans une anthologie sur mosaïque à Autun', *CRAI* [1993] 969–84).

[77] Potter, *Constantine*, 51–52, 127.

[78] *Panegyrici Latini* 6.1.1.

[79] Ibid., 6.1.4–6.2.2.

[80] Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise*, 219–20 (nn. 5–6). Several inscriptions do imply that Claudius II was Constantius' father (*ILS* 699, 723, 725, 730, 732), but R. Syme, 'The Ancestry of Constantine', in J. Straub (ed.), *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium, 1971* (Bonn, 1974) 237–53 at 244, is sceptical. Propaganda written about Claudius II later in the fourth century also connects him to an earlier time. See Westall, 'Genealogie', 9.

[81] *Panegyrici Latini* 6.14.1–2; Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 29 (pp. 44–46 Creed).

[82] *Panegyrici Latini* 6.2.4, 3.4. This sentence indicates clearly the possibility for local flatterers to use terminology that the more senior emperors in the East would surely have denied him. See n. 33 above.

He reveals that Constantine, at 'the most beautiful temple in the whole world',[83] had a divine vision on his way back to Trier after suppressing Maximian's coup. Although many have thought that the orator is describing a celestial event, witnessed by the whole army,[84] his language rather conveys a private personal experience.[85] Moreover, the temple at Andesina where this likely occurred was a site of incubation.[86] 'You saw, I believe, O Constantine, your Apollo, accompanied by Victory, offering you laurel wreaths, each one of which carries a portent of thirty years'.[87] Even more impressive than the vision itself is that, the orator emphasises, 'you *saw*, and recognised yourself in the likeness of him to whom the divine songs of the bards had prophesied that rule over the whole world was due'.[88] In claiming that Constantine not only saw but even embodied this god, the orator invoked older imperial connections with solar deities from Apollo to Sol Invictus.[89] Throughout the speech, by casting Constantine as a source of light and *invictus* himself, the speaker links his sovereign with the divine companion of soldier emperors starting with Aurelian and including Claudius II.[90] Having shattered the current power-sharing structure of the

[83] Ibid., 6.21.3. The temple is most likely to have been the sanctuary of Apollo at Andesina (now Grand in Vosges); Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise*, 248 (n. 91). See also C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule 7.1. Les Empereurs de Trève: les chefs* (Paris, 1926) 107 (n. 2); B. Müller-Rettig, *Der Panegyricus des Jahres 310 auf Konstantin den Grossen* (Stuttgart, 1990) 50; Bardill, *Constantine*, 88; G. Bonamente, 'Per una cronologia della conversione di Costantino', in Bonamente, Lenski and Lizzi Testa, *Costantino*, 89–112 at 96; F. Paschoud, 'Richiamo di una verità offuscata. Il secondo libro dei Maccabei quale modelo del De mortibus persecutorum', in Bonamente, Lenski and Lizzi Testa, *Costantino*, 373–80 at 378; Potter, *Constantine*, 126; T. Toom, 'Constantine's *summus deus* and the Nicene *unus deus*: Imperial Agenda and Ecclesiastical Conviction', *VoxP* 34 (2014) 103–22 at 104; Lenski, *Constantine*, 49.

[84] P. Weiss, 'Die Vision Konstantins', in J. Bleicken (ed.), *Colloquium aus Anlass des 80. Geburtstages von Alfred Heuss* (Kalmünz, 1993) 143–69, and 'The Vision of Constantine', *JRA* 15 (2003) 237–59.

[85] Müller-Rettig, *Panegyricus*; Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise*, 249 (n. 92). See also Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*; Toom, 'Constantine's *summus deus*', 104; Lenski, *Constantine*, 69 (n. 10). Potter, *Constantine*, 127: 'there can be little doubt that the source of information about this epiphany was the sole witness to the event, Constantine himself'.

[86] Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise*, 248 (n. 91).

[87] *Panegyrici Latini* 6.21.4.

[88] Ibid., 6.21.5.

[89] In 'Apollo, Christ, and Mithras: Constantine in Gallia Belgica', in K. Berthelot (ed.), *Regarding Roman Power* (Rome, forthcoming), I discuss the significance of Constantine's Augustan associations, given Gaul's deep connections to the Julio-Claudian dynasty as urban founders and benefactors.

[90] *Panegyrici Latini* 6.7.5: 'your sudden arrival illuminated the fleet', 'you seemed . . . to have flown in some divine chariot'; 6.8.4: 'You are even said, invincible Emperor . . .'; 6.17.1: your 'eyes flash' and your 'majesty dazzles us'. See Bardill, *Constantine*, 58–63; Lenski, *Constantine*, 49. Though, admittedly, Sol Invictus is not as prominent in the mints of Claudius II as for Aurelian, nevertheless, coins to Sol are still the majority of the mints for this short-reigning emperor; M. D. Smith, 'The Religion of Constantius I', *GRBS* 38 (1997) 187–208 at 187. See also D. Stein, 'Chasing the Sun: Coinage and Solar Worship in the Roman Empire of the Third and Fourth Centuries CE', *Records of the Canterbury Museum* 28 (2014) 31–47.

Tetrarchy by intimating that Constantine is destined to rule 'over the whole world' alone and pivoting Constantine away from his former patron, Hercules, the orator closes with a wish that Constantine will visit 'the seat of [his] divinity' at Autun's temple to Apollo.[91]

Beyond simply relating Constantine's vision of Apollo and its implications for the emperor's dynasty, divinity and future sole rule, the orator heightens these claims through his allusions to Virgil's Fourth Eclogue (1–10).[92] In this poem, the Cumaean Sibyl prophesies that with the birth of a child, justice and the worldwide Golden Age of Saturn will return when Apollo reigns through this child:

> Now the last age of Cumae's prophecy has come;
> The great succession of centuries is born afresh.
> Now too returns the Virgin; Saturn's rule returns,
> A new begetting now descends from heaven's height,
> O chaste Lucina, look with blessing on the boy
> Whose birth will end the iron race at last and raise
> a golden through the world: now *your Apollo* rules.[93]

The orator's references to 'your Apollo' whose 'rule over the whole world' the 'bards' had foretold links his remarks tightly to Virgil's poetry. Given that the speaker has also said that Constantine saw himself as Apollo in his dream, this allusion to the poem further reinforces the link between the emperor and the deity, imagining that the god will rule through the sovereign. This new regime will end an iron age and launch a golden one, namely the age of Saturn. It will be an age of justice, as the 'Virgin' will return.[94] Although in Virgil's poem, 'your Apollo' is addressed to Lucina and in the oration to Constantine, this slippage may say something about the character of Constantine's vision. For example, in addition to being the goddess of childbirth, Lucina was also another name for Hecate,

[91] *Panegyrici Latini* 6.22.2. B. S. Rodgers, 'Constantine's Pagan Vision', *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 259–78, argues that Constantine saw himself in the likeness of Augustus rather than Apollo. We do not need to choose between them. Apollo/Sol had long been a key part of the imperial cult – not only under Aurelian, but also under Augustus. Indeed, later in the fourth century, Servius' *Commentary on the Eclogues of Virgil* (4.10) claimed that Augustus was a manifestation of Apollo who reigned in heaven while he reigned on earth. See A. Mastrocinque, 'I sacerdoti di Apollo e il culto imperiale', in G. Urso (ed.), *Sacerdos: figure del sacro nella società romana* (Pisa, 2014) 223–38.

[92] Bardill, *Constantine*, 88, 128. See also Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise*, 250 (n. 93); Potter, *Constantine*, 127.

[93] Virgil, *Eclogues* 4.9–10: *Ultima Cumaei venit carminis aetas; magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo. Iam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna, iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto. Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo, cata fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo*; trans. G. Lee, *Virgil, the Eclogues* (London, 1984) 57 (emphasis added).

[94] For *virgo* as the goddess of justice, see Lee, *Virgil*, 115 (n. 6).

producer of dreams.[95] It is also not entirely outside the realm of speculation that Christians in the audience might have taken our orator to be suggesting that the light-bearing child is actually Christ who will rule through an emperor intent on launching a just new age.

One Christian who may have been in that audience is Lactantius, who will have just finished writing – but not dedicating – the *Divine Institutes*. Indeed, the strong parallels between the panegyric and the dedications to Constantine in Lactantius' first book indicate that Lactantius' public presentation of this volume occurred soon after.[96] Both rhetoricians emphasise the emperor's dynastic, not his Tetrarchic, claims to power. Both set him over and above the other emperors. Both invoke divine sanction for an especially long reign. Both suggest that Constantine will restore justice. So far does Lactantius go in his dedication. But if we read Book 7 of the *Divine Institutes* alongside the Autun professor's panegyric, the similarities are even more profound. Both imagine Constantine embodying a god of light, whether 'his Apollo' or Christ. Both invoke Virgil's Fourth Eclogue in a prophetic way to indicate that Constantine, ruling alone, will inaugurate a new age, the age of Saturn, when justice will return to the earth. Both imagine Constantine as embodying militant piety, the Gallic professor through linking him to Sol Invictus, companion of the third-century soldier emperors, and Lactantius by casting him as raising Christ's sword against tyranny and injustice. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive images. Remember that Lactantius says that the light of God – whom *we* call Christ – will come to earth.[97] How would Constantine's Christian subjects have read the coins he began minting in 310, depicting him with the radiate crown and companion of Sol Invictus?[98] If they followed Lactantius, they might say that 'the words are no problem since the meaning coincides with the truth'.[99]

[95] S. Lieberman, '*Quaestiones mythologicae*', *CO* 36 (1959) 54–56 at 55. Cf. also Tibullus 3.4.13 and C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1879) s.v. *Lucina*. Another provocative idea is that the orator is imagining Lucina as Constantine's natal hour (for which also see Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*). Was Saturn in the constellation of Virgo when he was born or at the time of his vision? For the presence of astrological tables at the Andesina temple, see J.-C. Goyon, 'L'origine égyptienne des tablettes décanales de Grand (Vosges)', in J.-H. Abry (ed.), *Les tablettes astrologiques de Grand (Vosges) et l'astrologie en Gaule romaine* (Paris, 1993) 63–76.

[96] The orator's decision to reveal the secret of Constantine's 'descent' from Claudius II indicates that his oration likely preceded Lactantius' dedication to *Divine Institutes*, Book 1.

[97] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 7.19.2–3 (*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 644–45).

[98] Bardill, *Constantine*, 84–89.

[99] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 4.9.3 (*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 300–301), treating Zeno's reference to the mind of Jupiter as the mind of God. See also 4.2.3 (*CSEL* 19.1, p. 277) for the veiled character of truth, visible only to Christians who know how to read.

The solar aspects of Constantine's militant piety – whether in Lactantius' Christian inflection or the more traditional portrait presented by the Gallic orator – deeply connected the emperor to local Gallic values, past and present. Indeed, Christian ideas mingled freely with solar symbolism and Hermetic wisdom. In the fifth century, Leo, bishop of Rome, lamented that people in the West confused Christ with the sun, a natural interpretation notwithstanding the Book of Acts where Paul sees Jesus in blazing light.[100] Closer to our time and place, the late fourth-century Bishop Philastrius of Brescia claimed that Gaul was home to a Christian heresy 'propagated by Hermes Trismegistus among the Celts'. These people, he says, adored the sun as the sole god and creator.[101] If there is a layer of truth to Philastrius' account, such people not only would have been a target audience for Lactantius' prophecies from Hermes Trismegistus (God will purify the earth with fire) and Apollo's priestess the Sibyl (God will send a king from the sun), testifying how the 'light of God' whom 'we call . . . Christ' would come to earth in arms.[102] But they may also have been particularly receptive to both images of the emperor's militant solar piety circulating from the court.[103]

More traditional solar traditions also ran strong in Gaul. According to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a number of northern European towns had marched with Aurelian, the emperor who reintegrated Gaul, under their own solar symbols.[104] And even before Constantine, other panegyrics from Autun emphasised imperial solar connections.[105] Constantine's father may have reinforced these connections as a result of his service under Aurelian.[106] The provinces that the emperor governed from Trier in the early

[100] Leo, *Sermones* 27 (*CCSL* 138, pp. 132–38), quoted in S. I. García, 'Sol/Helios en los Panegiricos latinos constantinos', *Antisteria* 1 (2012) 391–400 at 393. In the third century, the African author Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 1.13 (*CCSL* 1, p. 32) complains that 'ignorant people' took the Christian God to be the sun. Even mainstream Christian authors developed this association. For example, Ambrose of Milan called Christ the 'true sun (*verus[que] sol*)' in his hymn *Splendor paternae gloriae* (*Hymni* 2 [pp. 185–87 Fontaine et al.]). And Scripture itself is replete with solar metaphors (Isaiah 60:20; Malachi 4:2; Matthew 17:2; Revelation 10:1). See Pagels, *Revelations*, 85; Toom, 'Constantine's *summus deus*', 4 (nn. 22–23).

[101] Philastrius of Brescia, *Diversarum haereseon liber* 10 (*CCSL* 9, pp. 220–21).

[102] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 7.18.4, 7, 7.19.2, 4 (*CSEL* 19.1, pp. 641, 643–45).

[103] Quoted in García, 'Sol/Helios', 392.

[104] F. Altheim, *El dios invictos* (Buenos Aires, 1966) 120–21, in García, 'Sol/Helios', 392. See also M. Green, *The Sun-Gods of Ancient Europe* (London, 1991) 86–106 for solar traditions flourishing in Celtic areas.

[105] E.g. *Panegyrici Latini* 8.4.2 likens the Tetrarchs to the four horses of Helios' chariot, an image that subordinates them all to Sol (García, 'Sol/Helios', 396).

[106] According to *Historia Augusta*, Life of Aurelian 25.4–6, a battlefield miracle helped Aurelian's army against Zenobia of Palmyra. Entering Emesa, the emperor recognised the god who had helped him as Sol Invictus. See Potter, *Constantine*, 21.

fourth century were also home to the greatest (extant) concentration of Mithraea in the Roman empire, testimony to the prominence of the henotheistic Mithraic mysteries in the late third and early fourth century.[107] Although it is difficult to say much for certain about the beliefs or ritual practices of the devotees of Mithras, his frequent association with Apollo, with Sol Invictus and with the imperial cult mean that we should at least try to imagine how the symbolic language our orators invoked might have resonated among the community who frequented these sites.[108]

Conclusion

Constantine reigned successfully without challenge for decades, intensifying the Christian side of his image increasingly over time. For that, together with his own string of victories, he has Lactantius to thank. The professor's concept of the Christian commander avenging religious injustice with violence was powerfully in tune with local images and sensibilities regarding divine power and imperial rule. Evidence for Lactantius' utility to the court is ample. Not only did the court maintain the image of the emperor as the avenging victor, punishing religious persecutors with violence, throughout the rest of Constantine's reign,[109] but Lactantius' insight to marry this image with the earlier value of Christian *patientia* also shaped imperial policy, at least through the mid-320s.[110] In Gaul, the *Divine Institutes* made a lasting impression, as it circulated widely.[111] It may well be that with the passage of time many readers no longer made the links to the contemporary events

[107] S. Roselaar, 'The Cult of Mithras in Early Christian Literature: An Inventory and Interpretation', *Klio* 96 (2014) 183–217 at 183. Even Christians such as Hegemonius (*Acta Archelai*) conceded that they worshipped 'only the Sun, Mithras' (ibid., 203).

[108] Evidence for Mithras' identity as Sol Invictus comes from the famous inscription at Carnuntum (site of a Mithraeum) (see n. 33 above) where the Tetrarchs reaffirmed their mutual commitment, under the auspices of 'Deus Sol Invictus Mithras'; Roselaar, 'Cult', 203 (n. 62) cautions that not every inscription to Sol Invictus 'can be considered as a reference to Mithras', but R. Beck, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2006) 5, argues that this is Mithras' cult title.

[109] Demacopoulos, 'Eusebian Valorization', explores Eusebius' use of this image; his dependency on Lactantius has never seriously been explored.

[110] Digeser, 'Lactantius and Constantine's Letter', and more recently, 'The Edict of Serdica: Why Has It Been Ignored?' in V. Vachkova and D. Dimitrov (eds.), *Serdica Edict (311 AD): Concepts and Realizations of the Idea of Religious Toleration* (Sofia, 2014) 15–28.

[111] More than two hundred copies of the text survive throughout Europe, with most of the oldest copies in France. Those without dedications include the oldest (fifth century) at Bologna and Saint Gall. Of the remaining oldest undedicated copies, all are in France (Montpelier, Paris and Valence), save one at the Vatican. The copies with dedications are somewhat more recent. Two are in Paris (ninth and twelfth centuries), one is at Monte Cassino (eleventh century) and one is in Gotha (fourteenth–fifteenth century). See E. D. Digeser, 'Casinensis 595, Parisinus Lat. 1664, Palatino-Vaticanus 16 and the *Divine Institutes*' Second Edition', *Hermes* 127 (1999) 75–98 at 77.

from the allusions in Lactantius' apocalyptic Book 7.[112] Nevertheless, the power of the militant soldier emperor avenging injustice with violence that he and the anonymous Gallic orator both crafted in 310, nurtured in the soil of the Gallic borderlands, would continue to shape the ideal Christian sovereign for centuries to come.

[112] Jerome was the conduit through which many encountered Lactantius. His accounts of Lactantius in *De viris illustribus* (18, 58, 80, 111 [pp. 19, 34, 42–43, 50 Richardson]) and his *Chronici canones* show deep familiarity with Lactantius' work, most likely acquired (along with the texts themselves) when Jerome was a student in Trier. In several letters (*Epistulae* 48, 58, 60 [*CSEL* 54, pp. 347–87, 527–41, 548–75], 84 [*CSEL* 55, pp. 121–34]), Jerome praises Lactantius' eloquence and knowledge, but in his commentaries (*Commentarium in Isaiam* 8 [*CCSL* 73, pp. 315–53]; *Commentarium in Ezechielem* 4, 11 [*CCSL* 75, pp. 137–84, 481–546]; *Commentarium in epistulam ad Ephesios* pr. [*PL* 26, cols. 439–42]; *Commentarium in epistulam ad Galatas* 3.6 [*CCSL* 77A, pp. 203–27]), he criticises his view that the Book of Revelation was literally true. Through Jerome, Pope Damasus and Rufinus of Aquileia also discovered Lactantius. Gennadius of Marseilles, Rabanus Maurus and Peter Abelard engage with his views on Revelation.

PART III

Religious Violence in Late Antiquity

CHAPTER 10

*Religious Violence in Late Antiquity: Current Approaches, Trends and Issues**

Wendy Mayer

Introduction

Late Antiquity, it has long been assumed, is the historical period in which we first observe the widespread rise of religious intolerance.[1] Hand in hand with this view goes the premise that there is a direct causal relationship between religious intolerance and religious violence. That is, intolerance leads to conflict; conflict leads to violence.[2] Late Antiquity, in which Constantine's conversion to Christianity is viewed as a watershed moment,[3] is thus the period to which scholars look to observe religious violence and its origins.[4] In the past decade and a half there has been a move to unpack these entrenched ideas, with a growing number of scholars concluding that these assumed relationships – between the rise of Christianity and religious intolerance, and between religious intolerance and religious violence – are neither inevitable nor simple.[5] My own recent

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[1] See the tracing of this approach in W. Mayer, 'Re-Theorizing Religious Conflict', in W. Mayer and C. de Wet (eds.), *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* (London, 2018) 3–29 at 6–7.

[2] This is discussed in brief in ibid., 9.

[3] On this point, see W. Mayer, 'Religious Conflict: Definitions, Problems and Theoretical Approaches', in W. Mayer and B. Neil (eds.), *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam* (Berlin, 2013) 1–20 at 8, 12–14.

[4] The seminal work of J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (Berlin, 2004), M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2005) and T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009) sit within this space. The study by P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2010) has pushed the chronological origins back into the late third century.

[5] See e.g. the articles in A. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) and Chs. 3–12 in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 45–325.

research into the cognitive and neurological underpinnings of the phenomenon even goes so far as to conclude that, in both what we label religious intolerance and religious violence, causally religion is neither a distinctive factor nor essential.[6] But that is to get ahead of our discussion. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on how research has addressed the question of religious violence with specific reference to the world of Late Antiquity, to trace current trajectories in that research and to engage with the question of how best to approach it.

One proposition that scholars do all agree on is that there is in the literature of Late Antiquity, particularly within Christian circles, a large amount of violence. On the surface, that violence often appears to be distinctive and presents itself as religious in the sense that it is between adherents of a religion/religions, about religion or motivated by religion. Whether it is pagans persecuting and killing Christians,[7] Christians beating up and killing other Christians,[8] Christians destroying or mutilating synagogues, temples and statues,[9] accounts of divine vengeance,[10] or the memory of martyrs killed for their beliefs,[11] the surviving texts of Late Antiquity give a strong impression of a violent turn. The rise at this period

[6] W. Mayer, 'Australia's Moral Compass and Societal Wellbeing', in D. Costache, D. Cronshaw and R. Harrison (eds.), *Wellbeing, Personal Wholeness and the Social Fabric: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Cambridge, 2017) 110–31, and 'Fundamentalism as a Preconscious Response to a Perceived Threat', in A. Papanikolaou and G. E. Demacopoulos (eds.), *Fundamentalism or Tradition: Christianity after Secularism* (New York, 2019) 241–60. Same point by Kippenberg, p. 44, this volume, followed by Bendlin, p. 134.

[7] Claims of persecution persisted well beyond the Decian persecution. See e.g. the chapters in É. Fournier and W. Mayer (eds.), *Heirs of Roman Persecution: Studies on a Christian and Para-Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity* (London, 2020).

[8] Famously, the violent actions of 'circumcellions', 'Donatists' and their opponents in North Africa; see B. D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), with Van Nuffelen, pp. 276–84, this volume.

[9] E.g. the destruction of the synagogue at Callinicum in 388 and of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/92 CE. For a recent discussion of the former, see C. M. Chin, '"Built from the Plunder of Christians": Words, Places, and Competing Powers in Milan and Callinicum', in N. P. DesRosiers and L. C. Vuong (eds.), *Religious Competition in the Greco-Roman World* (Atlanta, 2016) 63–75. For a discussion of the sources concerning the latter, see J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered: The Cases of Alexandria, Panopolis and Philae', *Journal of Early Christian History* 6 (2015) 24–48 at 31–36 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 211–33 at 214–18) and Chapter 12 by Dijkstra, this volume.

[10] E.g. the destruction of the temple of Apollo at Daphne in 362 CE as reported by John Chrysostom, *De sancta Babyla* (*SC* 362, p. 308). M. Marcos, 'Religious Violence and Hagiography in Late Antiquity', *Numen* 62 (2015) 169–96, supplies a range of examples.

[11] The second half of the fourth century is the period in which martyr homilies and hagiographies become prolific, rituals associated with the cult of the martyrs become embedded in liturgical cycles and we see the development of hagiotourism. See S. Efthymiadis with V. Déroche, 'Greek Hagiography in Late Antiquity (Fourth–Seventh Centuries)', in S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 1 (Farnham, 2011) 35–94.

of Christian asceticism, the successor to martyrdom,[12] adds further weight to that impression. At the heart of that turn, the texts tell us, lies religion *per se*, but, more specifically, Christianity. Where in the past scholars had largely accepted that this narrated violence reflects historical reality, there are now large questions around how to interpret the violence that the texts portray. What relationship does it bear to historical reality? What is its purpose? What impact did it have on its audience? Further, if we are now asking 'was the violence real?', then we also need to ask 'was it really religious?'

To date, two trends are emerging in scholarship in response to these questions. One is to seek a clearer definition of religious violence and, as an essential part of that process, to unpack the assumptions behind what drives us to investigate religious violence *per se*. This avenue of investigation introduces large questions about the validity, for the period of Late Antiquity, both of the questions we pose in relation to the phenomenon we seek to analyse and of our approaches. In essence, what scholars who pursue this approach are asking is whether the phenomenon as well as the questions posed are emic or not, and whether the emic/etic distinction really matters. The other trend concerns a call to be more methodologically particular in respect to bringing together material and textual evidence, where this is possible, exploring evidence on a case-by-case basis and situating reported religious violence carefully in its local context.[13] The latter is more concerned with the relationship between rhetoric and reality (reported and actual violence); the former with whether we are barking up the right or wrong tree – or should be sniffing out something altogether different. As we will argue, both are important and, as several chapters in this book show, point us in some interesting directions.[14]

Religious Violence as a Category

One could, with some validity, conclude that until the shocking events of 9/11, for scholars in Western countries the topic of religious violence was

[12] See e.g. the varied accounts of self-mortifying ascetic behaviour in the *Historia Lausiaca*, *Historia monachorum* and *Apophthegmata patrum*, and the discussion in A. Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2013), as well as Chapter 13 by Vecoli and Chapter 14 by De Wet, both this volume. On accounts of attempted killing of children as an ascetic act, see C. T. Schroeder, 'Child Sacrifice in Egyptian Monastic Culture: From Familial Renunciation to Jephthah's Lost Daughter', *JECS* 20 (2012) 269–302.

[13] See Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt', 26–30 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 211–13), where this approach is outlined.

[14] See e.g. Chapter 11 by Van Nuffelen and Chapter 14 by De Wet, both this volume.

not at the centre of their radar.[15] Until then attention in this area had largely been confined to concerns about the nature of Jewish–Christian relations. For the second half of the twentieth century European scholars, particularly in Germany, struggled to make sense of the horrors of the Holocaust where, even though Jews were the majority victims, the violence was for the most part categorised as political (nationalist) and racial (antisemitic) rather than motivated by religion. One of the driving questions implicit in that struggle, nonetheless, has been what part the teachings of Christianity played in those events and thus to what degree it has engendered anti-Jewish violence throughout history and can be held responsible. This question has impacted the analysis of religious violence in Late Antiquity in that, in addition to endless discussion about the parting of the ways between the two religions, it has given rise to the anti-Judaism versus antisemitism debate.[16] This particular framing of the question – is Christianity responsible for anti-Jewish violence? If it targets the race, yes; if it targets the religion, no – has significantly shaped how scholars interpret relations between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and assess the production and purpose of Christian anti-Jewish polemic.[17] The assumption behind the claims of some scholars that Christian polemic of this period is anti-Jewish not antisemitic is that antisemitism, in that it by definition targets the Jewish people as a race, leads to physical violence, whereas anti-Jewish discourse, while it could be said to be discursively

[15] See also the General Introduction, p. 2, and Bremmer, p. 47, both this volume.

[16] The distinction (anti-Judaism condemns the Jewish religion; antisemitism, the Jewish people) goes back to M. Simon, *Verus Israel: étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'Empire romain (135–425)* (Paris, 1948). For the further development of this approach, see G. G. Stroumsa, 'From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism in Early Christianity?', in O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen, 1995) 1–26.

[17] The scholarship informed by this approach is vast. For examples with specific relevance to Late Antiquity, see J. G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 1985); L. H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, 1993); J. Hahn, 'Die jüdische Gemeinde im spätantiken Antiochia: Leben im Spannungsfeld von sozialer Einbindung, religiösem Wettbewerb und gewaltsamem Konflikt', in R. Jütte and A. P. Kustermann (eds.), *Jüdische Gemeinden und Organisationsformen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1996) 57–89; C. Fonrobert, 'Jewish Christians, Judaizers, and Anti-Judaism', in V. Burrus (ed.), *Late Ancient Christianity: A People's History of Christianity* (Minneapolis, 2005) 234–54; E. Soler, 'Les violences chrétiennes contre les synagogues dans l'Empire romain, pendant le conflit entre Théodose et l'usurpateur Maxime (386–388 apr. J.C.)', *Semitica et Classica* 4 (2011) 89–98; S. Morlet, 'L'antijudaïsme chrétien au IV^{e} siècle. À propos de quelques idées reçues', in M.-F. Baslez (ed.), *Chrétiens persécuteurs: destructions, exclusions, violences religieuses au IV^{e} siècle* (Paris, 2014) 163–88.

violent, only targets the religion and is therefore more benign.[18] In essence the premise on which this distinction is in turn based is that treating anti-Jewish Christian discourse as targeting the religion is emic (and therefore a valid analytical framework for the period), whereas viewing it as targeting the Jewish race is etic and invalid, since at that point in time the concept did not yet exist.[19] This is one example where distinctly modern questions and events have been projected back on to Late Antiquity, creating a problematic binary that needs to be brought to the surface and deconstructed.

This realisation urges caution in regard to the latest wave of research on religious violence in Late Antiquity, driven by the events of 9/11 and concerns in Europe and North America over the rise of violent religious radicals. The sudden interest in militant devotion, dying for God, the role of martyrs, violence enacted by religious groups and other related phenomena is driven as much by a desire to make sense of current events as a sense that it is in Late Antiquity (with the rise of Christianity and rise of Islam) that we observe the first florescence of very similar waves of violence.[20] There are large questions here about whether the Late Antique

[18] The analysis of John Chrysostom's *Adversus Judaeos* homilies by R. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth Century* (Berkeley, 1983), which counters the more pessimistic approach of R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1974), has been profoundly influential in this regard. Wilken argues that the rhetoric of blame (*psogos*) was in fact normative and its content thus familiar and ignored.

[19] That this distinction is in fact a case of special pleading from a neuro-cognitive perspective and irrelevant to the question of the impact of the discourse on its audience – and thus its agency in giving rise to violent action – is argued in W. Mayer, 'Preaching Hatred? John Chrysostom, Neuroscience, and the Jews', in C. L. de Wet and W. Mayer (eds.), *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives* (Leiden, 2019) 58–136.

[20] We could also say that it is driven by Western government demands in recent years that research in the humanities demonstrates contemporary relevance. Religious violence is one area where scholars of Late Antiquity can legitimately claim that study of the past has the potential to help explain the present, with some subsequent success in research funding. The following projects are samples: 'Multiculturalismo, convivencia religiosa y conflicto en la Antigüedad tardía (ss. III–VII)', 2007–2009, outlined by M. Marcos and J. Fernández Ubiña, 'Multiculturalismo, convivencia religiosa y conflicto en la Antigüedad Tardía', in M. V. Escribano Paño (ed.), *La investigación sobre la Antigüedad Tardía en España: estado de los estudios y nuevas perspectivas* (Málaga, 2009) 187–96; 'Intolerância religiosa e conflito cultural no Império Romano: a propósito de judeus, pagãos e hereges', 2007–2009 (one of a series of nationally and university-funded projects in Brazil, led by G. Ventura da Silva); 'Conflicto y convivencia en el cristianismo primitivo: retórica religiosa y debates escatológicos', 2009 (funded by the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Spain, in collaboration with Harvard University Department of Classics, and Divinity School); '"I Wish to Offer a Sacrifice to God Today": Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt', 2015–2021 (funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, led by J. H. F. Dijkstra); and our own project, 'Memories of Utopia: Destroying the Past to Create the Future (300–650 CE)', 2017–2019 (funded by the Australian Research Council). This is the tip of the iceberg. Gathering data on the actual number of proposals related to the topics of religious conflict and

world is directly comparable to the present – scholars focused on culture and society would argue that it is not – just as there are significant questions about the validity of the perception that religious violence is a phenomenon that first emerges – as a result of the unique blending of organised religion and imperial authority ('Church and state') – in Late Antiquity.[21] Again, here modern and postmodern assumptions about religion, about Church and state, about secularism and rationalism as social goods and religion as unscientific and superstitious all need to be foregrounded and unpacked, if we are to be sure that we are not asking questions of the Late Antique past that are invalid. Already there is significant discussion around the language of religious tolerance and intolerance as terms etic to Late Antiquity,[22] as well as deconstruction of the influential premise that polytheist religion is inherently tolerant, monotheisms intolerant (because they are exclusivist and coercive).[23] Of value for the *longe durée* is the work of Jan Bremmer in tracing modern premises about religion that rightly or wrongly inform current approaches.[24]

violence submitted to government and university funding agencies around the world since 9/11 would, one suspects, be instructive.

[21] For the argument that such violence is not unique to Late Antiquity or to monotheism but can be observed much earlier within Greek and Roman polytheist society, see J. N. Bremmer, 'Religious Violence and Its Roots: A View from Antiquity', *Asdiwal* 6 (2011) 71–79 at 73–77 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 30–42 at 32–34), and 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', in A. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) 8–30 at 12–18. See also the General Introduction, pp. 6–7, Raschle, p. 88, and Bendlin, pp. 136–38, all this volume.

[22] See, among others, M. Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London, 2009), and most recently, P. Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance durant l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2018).

[23] Some of the foundational studies in this area are J. Losehand, '"The Religious Harmony in the Ancient World": Vom Mythos religiöser Toleranz in der Antike', *GFA* 12 (2009) 99–132; T. Canella, 'Tolleranza e intolleranza religiosa nel mondo tardo antico: questioni di metodo', *VetChr* 47 (2010) 249–66; C. Markschies, 'The Price of Monotheism: Some New Observations on a Current Debate about Late Antiquity', in S. Mitchell and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2010) 100–11. These studies strive to counter the influence of Jan Assmann in this respect, particularly the thesis developed across his monographs *Moses der Ägypter: Entzifferung einer Gedächtnisspur* (Munich, 1998), *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (Munich, 2003), and *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Vienna, 2006) – namely, that religious conflict and violence are unique to and a natural consequence of monotheism. See also the General Introduction, p. 4, Kippenberg, pp. 17–18, Bremmer, pp. 49–50, and Bendlin, pp. 136–38, all this volume.

[24] Among numerous articles and chapters, see, in addition to his Chapter 2 in this volume, J. N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack and Rodney Stark*, 2nd ed. (Groningen, 2010), 'Religious Violence and Its Roots', and 'Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews'.

The argument that the concepts 'antisemitism' and 'religious tolerance/intolerance' are modern constructs that bear no relevance to Late Antiquity is mirrored by a recent development that approaches the question of religion and violence in the pre-modern world, not by interrogating categories or concepts related to violence, but by directly challenging the category 'religion'. This has implications for the exploration of religious violence in Late Antiquity in that we cannot, these studies imply, speak of religious violence in Late Antiquity, if Late Antiquity had no concept of religion. That is, whereas religious violence does exist in the present, violence of any kind that occurred in Late Antiquity must be attributed to other causal factors. In deconstructing religion as a category Brent Nongbri has led the way, recently followed by Daniel Boyarin and Carlin Barton.[25] The counter to this argument is exemplified in some of the chapters in the present volume,[26] to the effect that, just because in the ancient to late ancient world there was no concept of religion in the modern post-Reformation sense, this does not mean that the inhabitants of the world of Late Antiquity did not have a sense of the religious that accords with the definitions put forward by cognitive scientists of religion.[27] Human beings, this field of research argues, are naturally religious,[28] suggesting that arguments about whether religion in Late

[25] See B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, 2013); C. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York, 2016). Chapter 5 by Mason, this volume, follows this path and provides helpful discussion of this position.

[26] See esp. Bendlin, this volume, pp. 141–42.

[27] See R. McKay and H. Whitehouse, 'Religion and Morality', *Psychological Bulletin* 141 (2015) 447–73, who describe the foundational psychological systems that inform religion as hyperactive agency detection (HAD), theory of mind (ToM), teleofunctional explanation, the 'ritual stance' and kinship detection. As they explain (p. 454): 'Research in the "cognitive science of religion" has not sought to demonstrate the universality of any particular religious representations, such as various notions of ancestors, punitive deities, creator beings, or sacrifices, blessings, and rites of passage. Rather, the aim has been to show that the great variety of culturally distributed dogmas and practices that have been collectively labelled "religion" are shaped and constrained by a finite but disparate set of evolved cognitive predispositions – what we might call "religious foundations". These foundations comprise a set of evolved domain-specific systems, together with the intuitions and predispositions that those systems instill . . . Barring pathology . . . such tendencies emerge in all human beings without the need for deliberate instruction or training, even if their expression in development may be "tuned" by cultural environments'. For a recent application of aspects of the cognitive science of religion framework to ancient religion, see J. Rüpke, 'Religious Agency, Identity, and Communication: Reflections on History and Theory of Religion', *Religion* 45 (2015) 1–23.

[28] Although see A. C. T. Smith, *Thinking about Religion: Extending the Cognitive Science of Religion* (London, 2014) 10: 'I think that human minds are susceptible to religious content, but no more so than other culturally prolific activities that also engage emotion, memory, belonging and belief . . . While I acknowledge some convergence pressures upon cultural activities, they lead towards more

Antiquity is embedded and thus exists but is subsumed under other categories – for example, politics, society, culture[29] – or there is no religion in the ontological sense at all are, once again, asking the wrong questions. The intersection between analyses of ritual magic in Late Antiquity and the argument of scholars like Esther Eidinow that a subset of a category like 'magic' can in Antiquity validly be considered a form of religious violence,[30] along with work that explores freelance 'religious' experts,[31] and views of Late Antiquity as characterised by competition between teachers of a variety of ways of life and modes of knowing all of which touch on the human soul, concepts of creation and the divine,[32] point to an emic sensibility in Late Antiquity that embraces a messy spectrum of practices and beliefs. Many of the modes of knowing and praxeis along that spectrum – magic, astrology, physiognomy, philosophy, oratory, cults, medicine – have aspects that can be described as having religious foundations in a cognitive-science-of-religion sense but are excluded by a constrained modern definition of religion.[33] An emic approach suggests that all of these should be embraced within research in Late Antiquity into the phenomenon of religious violence. The question then becomes whether there are concomitant implications for broadening the study of the phenomenon in contemporary postmodernity.

generic tendencies such as the ability to hold belief sets, rather than a predisposition to hold religious beliefs. Religious cognition is not a unique domain, but a generic domain incorporating social relationships between agents. Although some evidence suggests that religious content will be attractive to human minds, it is not inevitable. In fact, religion is not sustained by natural cognitive mechanisms alone; the structure of cultural reinforcement remains essential'.

[29] For the concept of religion in the ancient world as embedded, see e.g. M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *The Religions of Rome*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1998) 43, and Bremmer, this volume, p. 49. Cf. J. Rüpke, *Die Religion der Römer: Eine Einführung* (Munich, 2001) 13. See also Nongbri's criticism of this approach in B. Nongbri, 'Dislodging "Embedded" Religion: A Brief Note on a Scholarly Trope', *Numen* 55 (2008) 440–60.

[30] E.g. J. E. Sanzo, 'Magic and Communal Boundaries: The Problems with Amulets in Chrysostom, *Adv. Iud.* 8, and Augustine, *In Io. tra.* 7', *Henoch* 39 (2017) 227–46; T. de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts* (Oxford, 2017); E. Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2013) 13–16, with her Chapter 3, this volume, p. 71 (n. 3).

[31] E.g. H. Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: the Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2016), and Raschle, this volume, pp. 100–104.

[32] Neoplatonic and theurgic philosophy both fall into this category. On the competition between modes of knowing, see e.g. T. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1994); S. P. Mattern, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing* (Baltimore, 2008); K. Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire. Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians* (Cambridge, 2012); S. B Levin, *Plato's Rivalry with Medicine: A Struggle and Its Dissolution* (Oxford, 2014).

[33] The distinction drawn between cult and religion when discussing religion in the ancient to late ancient world is itself a product of the modern definition of religion.

Operating within this model of competing discourses of knowledge as emic to Late Antiquity has been an approach which seeks to avoid reading the narrated violence in the texts of Late Antiquity at face value by exploring religion through the lens not of conflict but of competition.[34] This approach has its own problems, in that in order for something to compete in an assumed marketplace, it has to be something the seller can clearly define and market. This brings us back to the problem of either a narrow modern definition of religion or, if one accepts the emic view, something that is so ill-defined that it could not have readily been marketed as a product. By definition, in order to sell something, it has to be easily circumscribed and reified. As a way of getting around this, the argument here is that it is the purveyor who draws artificial distinctions between his or her own product and that of another, and that the circumscription of one's own product or that of a competitor's is itself a product of the competition.[35] In this respect, the religious competition approach offers one solution to unpacking the relationship between rhetoric and reality when it comes to the impression that the texts of Late Antiquity convey of a world rife with examples of religious violence. That the rhetoric of violence is a product of the competition comes to the fore in this explanatory model, minimising interest in the question of whether the reported violence bears any relationship to historical reality. However, adopting religious competition as a lens is not without a number of further problems.[36] Here again, it is important for scholars who take this approach to maintain awareness of its origins and so be conscious of its implicit assumptions. A survey of studies in this vein published over the past decade reveals its debt to a project put forward by New Testament scholars that had as a particular focus the first two centuries CE.[37] Its primary focus was the struggle of Christianity for success in an urban plurireligious society, not the period during which Christianity achieved success or when

[34] This is explicitly stated in the introduction to their volume by N. P. DesRosiers and L. C. Vuong, 'Introduction: Conflict, Cooperation, and Competition in Antiquity', in DesRosiers and Vuong, *Religious Competition*, 1–7 at 1–2. The case is similarly argued by the editors in 'Religion and Competition in Antiquity, an Introduction', in D. Engels and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *Religion and Competition in Antiquity* (Brussels, 2014) 9–44.

[35] This is an issue engaged with in my 'A Son of Hellenism: Viewing John Chrysostom's Anti-intellectualism through the Lens of Antiochene Paideia', in S.-P. Bergjan and S. Elm (eds.), *Antioch II. The Many Faces of Antioch: Intellectual Exchange and Religious Diversity in Antioch, CE 350–450* (Tübingen, 2018) 361–82.

[36] On the assumption implicit in religious competition of consumer choice and rational cost-benefit analysis and the problems that attach to this, see Mayer, 'Re-Theorizing Religious Conflict', 7–9.

[37] On this project of the Religious Rivalries Seminar of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, see Mayer, 'Religious Conflict', 8–10. The first book appeared in 2000.

it dominated the market. This should throw up a warning flag in that the scholars engaged in the project were operating largely within the paradigm of polytheistic religious tolerance.[38] Elements of the four Cs approach that they coined to facilitate their analysis of how religions interrelated – coexistence, cooperation, competition and conflict – rapidly became normative within the literature. Their reliance on the theories of John North is in itself not problematic, in that these scholars pursued carefully contextualised focused case studies of the kind advocated by Jitse Dijkstra.[39] It does, however, counsel caution when transferring the language and approach to the period of Late Antiquity and requires that ideas like 'embedded' religion or polytheist tolerance that might be associated with the concept of religious competition be carefully interrogated. Another level of concern is added when we acknowledge that questions surround whether the market model which undergirds the concept of religious competition is itself valid.[40]

It remains to mention one final way in which experiences like 9/11, Islamic-inspired terrorist acts around the world and the rise of Islamic State in Syria have driven these kinds of approaches to religious violence in Late Antiquity, and that is a not unnatural but rarely voiced presumption that there is something special about religious violence. It is this premise that has led to the overwhelming focus in this branch of scholarship on determining the precise nature of the causal relationship between religion and violence, and to the resultant interrogation of religion. Violence as a category has been significantly less well theorised, particularly in relation to Late Antiquity. It is well known, for instance, that violence had long been a part of life in the Graeco-Roman world at both the political and domestic levels,[41] yet far less attention has been paid to how this

[38] They built their project on the theories of the scholar of Roman religion John North. See the discussion at Mayer, 'Religious Conflict', 9 (n. 32). The association between religious competition and the tolerance paradigm is problematised by S. J. Larson, 'The Trouble with Religious Tolerance in Roman Antiquity', in J. D. Rosenblum, L. C. Vuong and N. P. DesRosiers (eds.), *Religious Competition in the Third Century CE: Jews, Christians, and the Greco-Roman World* (Göttingen, 2014) 50–59.

[39] See n. 13 above.

[40] Viewing religion through the lens of economic capital, albeit with some self-critique, persists in E. Urciuoli, 'Enforcing Priesthood: the Struggle for the Monopolisation of Religious Goods and the Construction of the Christian Religious Field', in R. L. Gordon, J. Rüpke and J. Petridou (eds.), *Beyond Priesthood: Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Imperial Era* (Berlin, 2017) 317–40.

[41] On the cruelty of the judicial system in Late Antiquity, see J. Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999); J. Hillner, *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015). On violence regularly inflicted on slaves in the domestic sphere, see C. L. de Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oakland, 2015) 170–219. This continues practices normative in Greece and Rome: P. Hunt, 'Violence

normative violence might have extended to and even permeated religious contexts.[42] Decoupling religion and violence in the causal sense at the theoretical level is, I would argue, as important as broadening our understanding of what in the Late Antique world constituted religion or fell within the domain of the religious,[43] if we are to progress in our exploration and understanding of religious violence.[44]

Rhetoric and Reality

If it is the case that scholars have been less successful at decoupling religion and violence and still largely operate within a paradigm of a direct causal relationship, the other major trend in the exploration of religious violence in Late Antiquity has made progress in the decoupling of the rhetoric of religious violence from the historical reality. The way in this regard has been led by projects like 'Vom Tempel zur Kirche. Zerstörung und Erneuerung lokaler Kulttopographie in der Spätantike', a subproject of a Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft-funded project that ran from 2000 to 2003.[45] The date of this project indicates that it was inspired by a larger trend naturally emerging in the study of Late Antiquity independently of 9/11 – to approach the claims of Christian texts with a hermeneutic of suspicion. In regard to claims of temple destruction, the substantially improved archaeological record supplied an important means of testing the historical validity of these claims and, where required, of offering a corrective.[46] This approach has since been extended to assessment of the

against Slaves in Classical Greece', and N. Lenski, 'Violence and the Roman Slave', in W. Riess and G. G. Fagan (eds.), *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World* (Ann Arbor, 2016) 136–61, 275–98.

[42] This question is posed to a small extent in Mayer, 'Preaching Hatred?'

[43] In broadening out this understanding, recent discussions among classicists deconstructing the category *polis*- or civic religion and focusing in on individual or personal religion may be helpful. See e.g. J. Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 2012), and 'Personal Religion: A Productive Category for the Study of Ancient Greek Religion?', *JHS* 135 (2015) 35–50; J. Rüpke, 'Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning "Cults" and "Polis Religion"', *Mythos* NS 5 (2011) 191–203, and 'Ein neuer Religionsbegriff für die Analyse antiker Religion unter der Perspektive von Weltbeziehungen', *Keryx* 4 (2016) 21–36.

[44] See also the General Introduction, p. 4, Kippenberg, pp. 18–19, Bremmer, pp. 67–68, and Bendlin, p. 134, all this volume.

[45] See the brief outline of the project in S. Emmel, U. Gotter and J. Hahn, '"From Temple to Church": Analysing a Late Antique Phenomenon of Transformation', in J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (eds.), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2008) 1–22 at 4.

[46] On this point and on the long-standing influence of Friedrich Deichmann's narrative of widespread violence against temples and their conversion into churches in the fourth and fifth centuries, see Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered', 28–29 (repr. in Mayer and De

abuse, destruction and mutilation of pagan statues.[47] The lack of material evidence for comparative purposes has not hindered the revision of rhetorical claims of destructive violence in the case of hagiographical literature where, on the one hand, we have cases like the *Life of Porphyry* and, on the other, cases like the Egyptian Antioch cycle. In the first instance a reliable redating of the text has required that claims of destruction in the fourth century of the Marneion at Gaza that had been taken at face value be read in light of the religious and political agenda of a later period.[48] In the second, the Antioch cycle of martyr homilies from Egypt, which purports to record the lives of saints martyred at Antioch under the Emperor Diocletian, has been shown to be a product of sectarian anti-Chalcedonian concerns of the seventh to eighth century.[49] In both cases it is unlikely that the events described have historical validity. Mar Marcos views the fourth to sixth century as a period in which the insertion into saints' lives of iconoclastic events (the destruction of temples and idols) peaked and then waned as the transformation of the Late Antique world into one that was perceived to be Christian was completed.[50] Such approaches sit side by side with analyses that acknowledge that some violence may have occurred, but that the origin of the violence is not religious. In addition to Steve Mason's analysis in Chapter 5 of this volume of two massacres reported by Josephus, the recent claim by Hans Teitler that, in the few cases of Christian deaths under Julian that can be verified, these can be attributed to a legitimate ruling of treason is indicative.[51] Emerging from the results

Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 212–13), and the General Introduction, p. 5. For examples of publications in this area, see, in addition to Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence', e.g. R. Bayliss, *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion* (Oxford, 2004); Hahn, Emmel and Gotter, *From Temple to Church*; L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden, 2011); J. Hahn (ed.), *Spätantiker Staat und religiöser Konflikt: Imperiale und lokale Verwaltung und die Gewalt gegen Heiligtümer* (Berlin, 2011); K. S. Freyberger, 'Zur Nachnutzung heidnischer Heiligtümer aus Nord- und Südsyrien in spätantiker Zeit', in H.-G. Nesselrath et al. (eds.), *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz: Libanios' Rede für den Erhalt der heidnischen Tempel* (Tübingen, 2011) 179–226.

[47] E.g. T. M. Kristensen, *Making and Breaking the Gods: Christian Responses to Pagan Sculpture in Late Antiquity* (Aarhus, 2013); R. M. Jensen, 'Spitting on Statues and Shaving Hercules' Beard: The Conflict over Images (and Idols) in Early Christianity', in B. Neil and K. Simic (eds.), *Memories of Utopia: The Revision of Histories and Landscapes in Late Antiquity* (London, 2020) 207–31.

[48] See now A. Lampadaridi, *La conversion de Gaza au christianisme: la Vie de S. Porphyre* (Brussels, 2016), and Bremmer, this volume, pp. 62–66.

[49] See A. Papaconstantinou, 'Historiography, Hagiography, and the Making of the Coptic "Church of the Martyrs" in Early Islamic Egypt', *DOP* 60 (2006) 65–86.

[50] Marcos, 'Religious Violence'. See also B. Caseau, 'Christianisation et violence religieuse: le débat historiographique', in Baslez, *Chrétiens persécuteurs*, 11–36.

[51] See H. C. Teitler, 'Ammianus, Libanius, Chrysostomus, and the Martyrs of Antioch', *VChr* 67 (2013) 263–88, and *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War against Christianity*

of these kinds of studies is a Late Antiquity in which religious violence was more local and sporadic than the narrated violence suggests, in addition to being misattributed or over-reported.[52]

Since the result of interrogating the extent to which narrated violence reports historical reality tends to be reductionist,[53] one response has been to ignore the historical reality altogether to focus solely on the rhetoric. The kinds of questions asked of the texts in this approach concern the purpose of the narrated violence, resulting in an emphasis on discerning authorial intention. The assumption here is that the narrated violence is intended to produce in the hearers a particular way of viewing themselves in relation to other religious groups in the world around them. Broadly speaking, the way these texts are approached is thus from the perspective of identity production.[54] A large number of studies of texts that were produced in Late Antiquity that have a focus on aspects of religious violence – however the latter might be defined – fall into this category.

There is a third path, however, which is just starting to emerge. The pursuit here is not to view rhetoric as a record of violence (past action), but to explore to what extent the rhetoric of violence produces violence (future action).[55] This moves the scholar away from the often impossible task of determining to what extent the reported memory is real or false or manipulated or flawed. In this approach the rhetoric of violence becomes a thing in itself, separate from the author's intention, and focus rests on the agency of the rhetoric. This is the intent of Marcos' study of reported iconoclasm in hagiography. She concludes that the stories functioned as

(New York, 2017), who concludes that not a single allegation that the Emperor Julian executed Christians on the basis of their religion is true, despite accounts of up to five different martyrdoms in a variety of sources.

[52] See also the General Introduction, pp. 5–6.

[53] So e.g. Marcos, 'Religious Violence', 190. For a criticism of the irenic view of the Late Antique world to which this reductionism can give rise, see D. Frankfurter, '"Religious Violence": A Phenomenology', *Ancient Jew Review* (24 February 2016), available online at www.ancientjewreview.com/articles/2016/2/24/religious-violence-a-phenomenology.

[54] For an example of this approach, see C. Shepardson, 'Give It Up for God: Wealth, Suffering, and the Rhetoric of Religious Persecution in John of Ephesus's *Church History*', in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 86–109, and her Chapter 15 in this volume. See also E. DePalma Digeser, 'Continuity and Change: The "Great" Persecution', in Fournier and Mayer, *Heirs of Roman Persecution*, 25–43, and her Chapter 9 in this volume, in which she demonstrates how Lactantius' production and promotion of a narrative of a militant Christian emperor, on the one hand, and of Christians as persecuted minority, on the other, has been so successful that it has been influential up until the present day.

[55] E.g. W. Mayer, 'Purity and the Rewriting of Memory: Revisiting Julian's Disgust for the Christian Worship of Corpses and Its Consequences', in Neil and Simic, *Memories of Utopia*, 75–91.

exemplars that subtly encouraged the use of violence in the conversion process.[56] Michael Gaddis had earlier concluded that stories of martyrdom and resistance provided a rationalisation and justification 'for zealous action enacting the anger of God against enemies of the faith'.[57] Despite their confidence, this causal relationship – violent rhetoric producing violent action – proves difficult to demonstrate. From modern examples we suspect this is the case, but proving it for the distant past is problematic.[58] Given the kinds of evidence at our disposal, it is usually simpler to prove the opposite – that narrated violence does or, more often, does not reflect actual historical violence. My own engagement with research in the areas of experimental moral psychology, cognition and neuroscience suggests that explanatory models from those disciplines have the potential to move us one step closer to determining the actual impact of narrated violence.[59] Those results will always be limited, however, in that we cannot go back into the past and test the impact of narrated violence on individuals or groups via interviews, surveys and media footage. The conclusions drawn as a result of this kind of approach can only ever be and will always remain speculative.

Making Sense of Religious Violence

If we turn to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, we can see that in the context of Late Antiquity there has been considerable discussion to date concerning the nature and definition of religious violence and whether we can say that, as a category, it existed. Emerging from these debates are a number of key issues which scholarship needs to address as theorisation and investigation in this area progress. One is whether, for the purposes of exploring and understanding the phenomenon, religion existed or not as a distinct category in Late Antiquity matters. A second is

[56] Marcos, 'Religious Violence', 190–91.

[57] Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, x, although one suspects that in his view the justification for violence occurred after rather than before the fact. That is, the rhetoric of violence validates violence that is already occurring. See especially his conclusion (pp. 323–41), where, it is to be noted, the role the rhetoric of violence played is linked to identity production. This is different from viewing the rhetoric as actively producing violence.

[58] Frankfurter, 'Religious Violence', refers to observable patterns, but these can be, and have been, variously interpreted. This is the case, for example, with legislation concerning violence against Jews. See e.g. S. Doležal, 'Possible Legal Impact of the Homilies *Against the Jews* by Joannes Chrysostomos', *GLP* 23 (2010) 15–29 and the opposite opinion of Morlet, 'Antijudaïsme chrétien au IV^{e} siècle', esp. p. 188.

[59] See Mayer, 'Preaching Hatred?', where the relationship between rhetoric, cognition and action is set out in detail.

whether religious violence is distinctive as a phenomenon and can be separated from all other forms of violence. A third is what does or does not belong under the category 'religious violence', to which a related issue is determining when something is religious violence and when it is another category of violence or just violence. Asking what makes the violence religious will help us to further refine our understanding. A fourth is related to both branches of scholarship. Greater consciousness needs to be exercised when moving between exploration of religious violence as a real phenomenon (a thing that actually happened) and religious violence as a rhetorical and/or ideological construct. The line between the two is still frequently blurred in scholarship on the topic. Exploration of the subtleties of the relationship between the two, on the other hand, is a space in which some of the most fruitful research is likely to be produced in the future. A fifth issue is the need for greater self-awareness about what we are trying to describe, explore or recover and about the assumptions that drive this activity. Whether it is suppositions about different kinds of religion being irenic or violent (tolerance/intolerance; polytheism/monotheism) or about religion being optional (the religious marketplace/competition) even as we argue that it was 'embedded' (and thus automatic?), there continue to be a number of problematic, unvoiced assumptions that infuse one thesis or another. These issues will continue to plague investigation into the future. We need to continue to be diligent about bringing these assumptions into the light and deconstructing them. Making sense of religious violence is nonetheless a worthwhile endeavour. As with everything to do with the world of Late Antiquity the more we read through our texts, the more we bring together material and textual evidence, the more insights we gain and the more we discover both about the Late Antique past and about ourselves as scholars. In this endeavour both avenues of approach – to interrogate categories and definitions and to theorise at the higher level; and to explore evidence on a case-by-case basis, situating reported religious violence carefully in its local context – are essential. It is in the interaction between these two scholarly approaches – the one providing explanatory models and theories, the other testing them and showing up their strengths and weaknesses – that progress in making sense of religious violence with specific reference to the world of Late Antiquity in the future lies.

CHAPTER 11

*Coercion in Late Antiquity: A Brief Intellectual History**

Peter Van Nuffelen

> Don't you dream of a world, a society, with no coercion?
> Yes: where a foetus is able to refuse to be born.[1]

Introduction

Religious violence is usually taken to encompass clashes between religious groups and the destruction these caused, as well as violence organised by institutions, in particular state and Church, against religious minorities. Using a broader definition of violence than just physical violence,[2] such institutional violence included measures used to coerce individuals to abandon certain practices and beliefs judged harmful to society and themselves. This conjures up the question as to what coercion actually meant in Late Antiquity.

This chapter seeks to understand how coercion was conceptualised in Late Antiquity and to trace its origins. It is born out of discomfort with the unreflective way in which some scholarship uses concepts such as 'toleration', 'violence' and 'coercion'.[3] The uncritical usage of such terms may hamper our understanding of past societies, given the moral charge they carry in modern usage: toleration has developed into a central value of Western societies, whilst modernity is often believed to have reduced violence in society.[4] Thoroughly modern ideas associated with toleration,

* This chapter is a reworked version of P. Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2018) 93–128 (Ch. 3). The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ERC Grant Agreement no. 313153.

[1] W. H. Auden, *Collected Poems* (London, 1994) 299.

[2] See the General Introduction, p. 3, Bremmer, p. 48, and Bendlin, pp. 144–45, all this volume.

[3] See the General Introduction, pp. 3–4, and Mayer, pp. 253–61, both this volume.

[4] Cf. J. Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (London, 1995); J. P. Reemtsma, *Vertrauen und Gewalt: Versuch über eine besondere Konstellation der Moderne* (Munich, 2009). If there is now increasing attention for the historical variation of e.g. violence and better theoretical approaches (see e.g. C. Grey, 'Shock, Horror, or Same Old Same Old? Everyday

such as neutrality of the state, monopoly of violence or religious toleration as central to a peaceful society, have crept into analyses of late ancient coercion.[5] As our concept of toleration goes hand in hand with a narrative of moral and historical progress (the peaceful modern state was enabled by the taming of religion), any past society is by definition intolerant. This is not much more than a syllogistic reasoning: it does not tell us more than was included in the premises. Obviously, we see in past societies many things we do not like from a modern perspective, but unreflective likes and dislikes may stand in the way of really understanding such societies. Indeed, it is not easy, but all the more necessary, to escape the opposition between tolerant polytheism and intolerant monotheism that has defined much of the debate concerning the ancient world.[6]

The way forward is to increase our awareness of how seemingly ordinary terms colour our understanding of Late Antiquity and, for this particular chapter, to understand better how coercion was conceptualised in Late Antiquity.[7] Coercion, as a bad form of dealing with religious difference, is often taken to be the antinomy of persuasion that allows freedom of choice, a good way of negotiating religious difference. For example, Augustine's famous 'change of heart' regarding the role of coercion in the conversion of the Donatists, which will be an important example in this chapter, has been interpreted as his abandoning one system of thought (toleration) in favour of another one that rests on completely different principles (intolerance). Similarly, it is often stated that the Christian concept of toleration was fundamentally ambivalent and torn between an irenic and an eristic current. If the first rejected force, the second espoused it and gained the upper hand after Constantine.[8]

Violence in Augustine's Africa', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6 [2013] 216–32), there is less reflection on the fact that our very interest in these concepts is due to a certain narrative of modernity.

[5] See e.g. P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2010); H.-G. Nesselrath (ed.), *Libanios: Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz* (Tübingen, 2011); V. Leonard, 'The Origin of Zealous Intolerance: Paulus Orosius and Violent Religious Conflict in the Early Fifth Century', *VChr* 71 (2017) 261–84.

[6] See esp. the General Introduction, pp. 4, 6–7, and Bendlin, pp. 136–38, both this volume.

[7] My approach is thus methodologically different from the one espoused by Mayer, this volume, pp. 253–61, who uses a richer modern conceptual apparatus.

[8] C. Schneider, 'Ursprung und Ursachen der christlichen Intoleranz', *ZRGG* 30 (1978) 193–218; H. Drake, 'Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance', *P&P* 153 (1996) 3–36; G. G. Stroumsa, 'Tertullian on Idolatry and the Limits of Tolerance', in G. N. Stanton and G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge, 1998) 173–84; R. Forst, *Toleranz im Konflikt. Geschichte, Gehalt und Gegenwart eines umstrittenen Begriffs* (Frankfurt, 2004) 67–74; M. Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London, 2009) 25; M. Marcos, 'Persecution, Apology, and the

Such a representation is not satisfactory. I have argued elsewhere that every historical concept of toleration is ambivalent in the sense that it defines the limits of toleration on the basis of the principles that justify toleration.[9] For example, John Locke does not extend toleration to the Catholics and atheists because in his view they fail to adhere to the principles that justify toleration for Protestant sects (respect of public authority and the values it represents). In our days, the French state forbids the wearing of the veil in the context of public office because it sees it as infringing on the principle of neutrality that it considers to be the guarantee of peaceful cohabitation of different religions. In other words, the expression of diversity is denied to protect that same diversity. As this chapter seeks to show, the role played by coercion in late ancient thought bears this principle out. Persuasion is accorded the primary role in settling religious difference, in a temporal and moral sense: debate should first be allowed a chance before other solutions are sought to the conflict. As we shall see, coercion comes into play when persuasion is rendered difficult and is justified by the same principles that underpin the primary role of persuasion.[10] These ideas are embedded in a pedagogical understanding of the role played by leaders in communities.

Besides illuminating how coercion and persuasion are part of a single system of thought, this chapter seeks to trace the origins of such ideas. I shall show that they can be found in pagan and Christian sources alike and that they represent the adoption by Christian authors of principles of classical philosophy. It is, therefore, misleading to speak of a 'Christian' concept of toleration or coercion: we are dealing with a late ancient phenomenon that receives a particular articulation in Christian circles but can be found elsewhere too. As said, I shall devote particular attention to Augustine's justification of the use of state coercion against the Donatists. It has too often been studied in isolation, leading to a perception of incoherence in his thought and to the idea that we see a particularly Christian or even Augustinian concept of coercion at work. I argue, by contrast, that his thought is fundamentally coherent and in line with late ancient ideas about persuasion and coercion.

Reflection of Religious Freedom and Religious Coercion in Early Christianity', *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 20 (2012) 35–69.

[9] Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance*, 93–95.

[10] P. Van Nuffelen, 'The End of Competition? Religious Disputations in Late Antiquity', in D. Engels and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *Competition and Religion in Antiquity* (Brussels, 2014) 149–72.

A Late Ancient Concept of Coercion

Let us start by brotherly juxtaposing a Neoplatonist philosopher and a Christian bishop. In the 340s or 350s, the philosopher Sopater composed a letter of advice addressed to a certain Himerius who was about to become provincial governor.[11] One of the extracts preserved in the anthology of Stobaeus states the following:

> You must deter them from wrongdoing by joining persuasion to compulsion. To those who have gone astray, you must apply the appropriate corrective of justice. Pretend to ignore slight and common wrongdoings – for it is not helpful simply to attack everyone and anyone who comes along nor is it to overlook things when you become aware of them. Treat anything actually serious for the ruled with the remedies given by the laws.[12]

In governing his subjects, so Sopater advises, Himerius should apply both coercion and persuasion with the aim of bringing them on to the right track. Punishment is not retributive but corrective: as the medicinal metaphor of the last sentence shows, the aim is to heal the subject. The advice fits well with what we know of Neoplatonic political thought,[13] but has also striking similarities with what, more than half a century later, Augustine said at the Conference of Carthage (411), during which Catholic and Donatist bishops debated their disagreement:

> For we say that ecclesiastical discipline is not to be neglected and, wherever evil ones have been found out, they have to be coerced so that they be corrected, not just by verbal reprimands, but also by excommunication and degradation, so that they seek a humble place of salvation in the Church. This we say to happen for their health, not by hatred but by zeal for the salvation of our brothers . . .[14]

[11] Cf. S. C. R. Swain, *Themistius, Julian and Greek Political Theory under Rome: Texts, Translations, and Studies of Four Key Works* (Cambridge, 2013) 17–18.

[12] Sopater, *Letter to Himerius* in Stobaeus 4.5.58: Δεῖ δὲ ἀπείργειν μὲν τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀνάγκῃ πειθὼ συναρμόσαντα, σφαλεῖσι δὲ σύμμετρον τῆς δίκης ἐπάγειν τὴν ἐπανόρθωσιν, ὅσα μὲν μικρὰ καὶ συνήθη τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀγνοεῖν δοκοῦντα (οὔτε γὰρ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἁπλῶς καὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ἐπεξιέναι οὔτε γιγνώσκοντα παρορᾶν ὠφέλιμον), τὰ δὲ ἤδη τοῖς ἀρχομένοις ἐπαχθῆ ταῖς ἐκτῶν νόμων θεραπείαις ἰώμενον; trans. Swain, *Themistius, Julian, and Greek Political Theory under Rome*, 130. See also Stobaeus 4.5.54, 56, 60; Julian, *Epistulae* 89b.289b (p. 156 Bidez), and 114 (pp. 193–95 Bidez, with a similar statement on Christian bishops).

[13] D. J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2003); D. O'Meara and J. Schamp, *Miroirs de princes de l'empire romain au IV^e^ siècle* (Fribourg, 2006).

[14] *Gesta collationis Carthaginensis* 3.281 (*SC* 195, pp. 1239–40): *Dicimus enim nos non neglegendam quidem ecclesiasticam disciplinam et, ubicumque fuerint proditi mali, coercendos eos esse ut corrigantur, non solum sermone correptionis, verum etiam excommunicationibus <et> degradationibus, ut humilem locum salutis in ecclesia quaerant. <quod dicimus> ad medicinam ipsorum fieri, non odio sed studio*

Just as Himerius was to take care of the community entrusted to him (the inhabitants of the province), Augustine talks about the members of the Christian community headed by a bishop. He has to ensure that all the members of his flock are on the right track, which in this particular case means that they should not heed Donatist teachings. Augustine too uses the metaphor of medicine, showing that the aim must be to re-establish good attitudes. In this statement, Augustine lists the measures a bishop can take to correct deviants in his community: a verbal reprimand, exclusion from the community[15] and degradation (this last measure can only apply to clergy). Yet these serve, as much as the measures suggested by Sopater, the creation of a good community. That is why Augustine emphasises that one can punish only out of care and not out of hatred: if one merely wishes to exact revenge for the offence or to please one's sadism, the punishment misses its aim and will be detrimental to the individual and the community, which is built on mutual love.[16] In this way, Augustine traces, as much as does Sopater, a distinction between justified and unjustified measures of coercion: punishment that does not serve the good of the community is to be avoided.

It is not difficult to notice the similarity of views in these two extracts: coercion takes place within a community with the aim of keeping it healthy; to that end, coercion is corrective and must be applied with the aim of allowing the return of the offender into the community; therefore the community's leader must apply coercion with the good in mind; coercion is handed out on the basis of laws (of the state or the Church). In what follows I shall add some flesh to these bones by tracing the origins of these ideas in classical philosophy. Further evidence will help us to see better how coercion is articulated on persuasion, which has, as said, moral and logical priority over coercion.

A Brief Intellectual History

This section offers a brief sketch of the origins of the ideas we encountered in the previous section. Admittedly done with the broadest of brushes, it

salutis fraternae . . .; unless indicated, as in n. 12 above, translations throughout this chapter are mine. For background, see J. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge 1995), 244; T. J. van Bavel, 'Correctio' and 'Correptio', in C. Meyer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexicon*, vol. 2 (Basel, 1996) 22–26 and 35–39; V. Grossi, 'Correctio', in A. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages* (Grand Rapids, 1999) 242–44.

[15] J. Hillner, *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015) 70, notes that excommunication is rare as a punishment.

[16] On love, see D. X. Burt, *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, 1999) 217.

addresses two questions. First, to what degree are there similarities between classical philosophy and late ancient thought, particularly Christian, regarding coercion? And second, can we consider this to be a continuity of ideas and not just similarity of views?

One does not need to be widely read in ancient philosophy to note similarities between Augustine's idea of correction and classical accounts. Indeed, Michael Erler has listed a series of parallels, for example in Seneca.[17] He argues that Augustine differs from classical philosophy by accepting forms of violent correction (that is, coercion). At first sight, this seems logical: an apprentice philosopher entered of his own will into a philosophical community and could simply leave it were he to be subjected to coercion. Moreover, education in philosophy is a development of one's rational faculties and a basic presupposition was that one cannot be forced to be rational. One espouses the truth freely once one has understood it. Yet Augustine would agree with this last proposition: he accepted the general presupposition of Patristic thought that one cannot force someone to accept Christianity. Indeed, conversion has to be a free process, for one cannot involuntarily assent to the truth.[18] This similarity suggests we should look again at this supposed difference between classical and Christian thought. In fact, there is fundamental continuity, also in the advocacy of violent coercion. One should, however, take into account the type of community that is being discussed. Indeed, philosophers made a distinction between a community of philosophers and a political community. If in the former coercion has no place, this was not the case for the latter. Indeed, the Neoplatonist philosopher Olympiodorus (*c.* 495–570) defined the difference between the two communities as that between persuasion, exercised by a teacher, and coercion, exercised by a political leader.[19]

Pierre Hadot has famously shown that ancient philosophy was not just a technical discipline that sought to understand man and world, but proposed a way of life that was entirely oriented towards the good (however it was conceptualised). Being a philosopher affected not just one's rational faculties, but also domains we would call spiritual and ethical. The happy life could not be reached without a rational understanding of causes and principles, which had to be freely understood, for one cannot be coerced to

[17] M. Erler, 'Paideia, Peitho und Bia', in C. P. Mayer and G. Förster (eds.), *Augustinus – Recht und Gewalt: Beiträge des V. Würzburger Augustinus-Studientages am 15./16. Juni 2007* (Würzburg, 2010) 13–28. Cf. Seneca, *Letters* 25.1–3, 52.2–6, 95.36, and *De beneficiis* 5.25.5.

[18] See e.g. Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 2.1–2 (*CCSL* 2, p. 1130); Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 5.2 (*CSEL* 19, pp. 403–406).

[19] Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the Gorgias of Plato* 41.3. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.2.1.

understand something. What is not fully interiorised, is not understood.[20] Philosophers were aware of the difficulties that progress towards *eudaimonia* and knowledge posed: most people do not arrive there, even among those who really try to. Different reasons were put forward by different schools, such as a lack of knowledge (Plato), a failed control of emotions (Stoicism) or a dysfunctional will (Augustine). Generally, two types of therapy were envisaged: one that worked from the inside towards the outside, by rational argumentation; and one that worked from the outside to the inside, whereby one first adjusted one's habits, creating a good disposition in the person towards accepting the truth. The first/second-century Platonist Plutarch calls this *epilogismos* ('reflection') and *ethismos* ('habituation').[21] The first form of therapy is well illustrated by Philodemus' treatise on *parrhesia* ('outspokenness'; first century BCE). The term designates the criticism that friends exercise on each other and teachers on pupils in order to help them to progress towards virtue. Philodemus is aware that such criticism may be difficult to stomach, for example when it comes from one's social inferior, and that it may take a while before good advice is interiorised.[22] Criticism here serves to change one's mind so as to entail a change in action. The second can be illustrated by Aristotle's view that one becomes virtuous by acting virtuously: that is, one needs to learn good habits, on which one reflects, in order to lift oneself from an unreflective level to a philosophical one. This will help one to interiorise the correct disposition. For Aristotle, emotions such as fear or shame can be helpful to steer one in the right direction.[23] This second form of therapy helps us to see that one should not ascribe to ancient thought a purely intellectualist position, as if one first has to understand the truth or the good in order to do it.

If one compares Augustine's view on coercion with the statements of ancient philosophers uttered in relation to the philosophical community, Erler is right in noting a fundamental difference. One will not encounter

[20] P. Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (Paris, 1996). See e.g. Plato, *Republic* 411d, 536d–610c; *Laws* 722b; *Timaeus* 48a.

[21] Cf. G. Roskam, *On the Path to Virtue: The Stoic Doctrine of Moral Progress and Its Reception in (Middle-)Platonism* (Leuven, 2005); L. van Hoof, *Plutarch's Practical Ethics: The Social Dynamics of Philosophy* (Oxford, 2010).

[22] Philodemus, *On Outspokenness* fr. 65–67, 69. In general, see P. Lain-Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven, 1970).

[23] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.9 1099b, 2.1 1103a–b, 6.13 1144b, 10.9 1180a; *Eudemian Ethics* 1.1 1214a, 2.2 1220a–b; *Politics* 8.1 1337a. Cf. Z. Hitz, 'Aristotle on Law and Moral Education', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 42 (2012) 263–306. For parallel ideas in Seneca, see N. Sherman, 'Of Manners and Morals', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 53 (2005) 272–89.

the use of force in a philosopher's reflection on progress in such a community. Yet ancient philosophers also envisaged a different community, that of the city. In philosophical thought, the political community was also understood as a community oriented towards the good, in which each individual aspired to living a virtuous life and helped in rendering the entire community virtuous. If a community of philosophers consisted of people willing to become virtuous, this was hardly the case for all citizens. Moreover, if achieving *eudaimonia* was hard for philosophers, it was so much more for ordinary individuals. The central question of ancient political thought is, therefore, 'How can a city be virtuous?' Xenocrates, the successor of Plato at the helm of the Academy (*c.* 400–314 BCE), saw no other option but coercion:

> [They] confirmed the remark of Xenocrates about true philosophers, that they alone do willingly what all others do unwillingly because of the law, even as dogs by a blow and cats by a noise are turned from their pleasures and regard with suspicion the danger that threatens them.[24]

Coercion, through positive law, helps to bring about a virtuous community. From a different angle, Aristotle considered good laws necessary to bring about a good initial disposition in young people that would help them to open up to the counsel of reason. He did not spell out if he thought this would be enough to bring about moral excellence in all individuals. Even so, Aristotle did not believe in an easy path to virtue: 'Moral learning is more a matter of constraint and discipline than of skipping freely towards the delights of virtue'.[25] In his *Laws*, Plato seems to have envisaged the necessity of tyrannical rule by the so-called young tyrant in order to make a community progress towards virtue. Significantly, this tyrant was supposed to use both persuasion and coercion.[26] His rule would be a provisional stage in the creation of a virtuous community, but the *Laws* make clear that persuasion and coercion always remain linked. Indeed, the laws that Plato draws up in this dialogue are preceded

[24] Xenocrates fr. 3 = Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 6.446e: ἐπιβεβαιοῦσαν τὸν Ξενοκράτους λόγον, ὃν ἐκεῖνος εἶπε περὶ τῶν ἀληθῶς φιλοσοφούντων, ὅτι μόνοι ποιοῦσιν ἑκουσίως ἃ ποιοῦσιν ἄκοντες οἱ λοιποὶ διὰ τὸν νόμον ὥσπερ ὑπὸ πληγῆς κύνες ἢ γαλαῖ ψόφῳ τῶν ἡδονῶν ἀποτρεπόμενοι καὶ πρὸς τὸ δεινὸν ὑποβλέποντες; trans. W. C. Helmbold, Loeb. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.9.9.

[25] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.9 1179b.15. Quotation from Hitz, 'Aristotle on Law', 294. See also H. J. Curzer, 'Aristotle's Painful Path to Virtue', *JHPh* 40 (2002) 141–62.

[26] Plato, *Laws* 4.711d: πειθὼ καὶ ἅμα βίαν; cf. *Laws* 5.735d–736c; Cicero, *Laws* 2.14: *Quos imitatus Plato videlicet hoc quoque legis putavit esse, persuadere aliquid, non omnia vi ac minis cogere.* M. Schofield, *Plato* (Oxford, 2006) 43–50, dismisses the role of the young tyrant as irony, but see L. Brisson, 'Le tyran dans les lois: la violence fondatrice', in S. Gastaldi and J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt-Augustin, 2009) 129–37, esp. p. 134.

by extensive and moralising preambles. As argued by André Laks, they ensure that the ideal state as sketched in the *Laws* is not reduced to the mere exercise of legal violence. Naked laws without preambles that seek to convince the subjects would run counter to the fundamental aim of creating a virtuous community: indeed, one can only accept the truth voluntarily and not through coercion. Even so, many people will not be able to rise to that level, rendering laws and coercion necessary to ensure that the community as a whole is virtuous (and hence a real community, for a community without the order of virtue cannot continue to exist).[27] In ancient philosophy, then, the political community cannot survive without laws, which, on the one hand, create good dispositions in the individuals that can rise to the level of true virtue, and, on the other, ensure that the community as a whole, including its weakest members, remains virtuous. As Plato's *Laws* illustrate, coercion remains embedded in a wider belief in the logical and moral priority of rational persuasion.

In Late Antiquity, one finds similar conceptions among Neoplatonist thinkers. In his commentary on the *Gorgias* of Plato, Olympiodorus starts out from the idea that we are all in need of re-education, for we all make errors. The political leader has to do this for the civic community – a process that Olympiodorus compares to the taming of wild horses. Another comparison is a teacher, except that Olympiodorus concedes that the political leader has a wider arsenal of tools. His primary means is rational persuasion, but Olympiodorus also accepts the use of tribunals and the application of punishments, including the death sentence. Yet a fundamental condition of such actions by the leader is that he himself is just – just as Augustine demanded that coercion should be done for the good of community and not out of personal hatred.[28]

If, then, we look at how ancient philosophers thought about moral progress in both communities, philosophical and political, one has to accept the fundamental identity of views between Sopater, whom we tend to see as an inheritor of classical thought, and Augustine, whom we would label an exponent of Christian thought. By 'fundamental identity' I mean that the formulations may differ but the underlying frame of thought is identical. In this respect I differ from the important account of ancient and Christian discourses on punishment recently offered by Julia Hillner. Whilst recognising the similarity between Christian views and those of

[27] A. Laks, *Médiation et coercition: pour une lecture des Lois de Platon* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2005). Schofield, *Plato*, 84–88 downplays the importance of coercion.
[28] Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the Gorgias of Plato* 41.2–45.2.

Plato, Hillner sees a difference in result between Christian penance and secular attitudes: in Christian thought, 'penance did not return a human soul to virtue or wipe out sinfulness, but gave individuals a second chance at equipping themselves for facing the final judge of their sinfulness' (that is, God in the Final Judgement).[29] Yet, I would argue, penance and other forms of disciplining within the Church were also about social reintegration and not just about individual salvation: indeed, the Church was considered to be the community to which one should belong in order to hope for salvation. Hillner seems, in fact, to ignore the ecclesiological dimension of Patristic thought. Hence, as in the quotation of Augustine above, individual salvation and communal integrity go hand in hand.[30]

I shall answer my second question (Does this similarity betray continuity of thought?) more rapidly, also by engaging with Hillner's account. She has admirably traced how in Late Antiquity reform came to dominate the discourse on punishment. This marks a change from early imperial legal thought, she argues, when most justifications 'remained focussed on retribution, deterrence, and the preservation of honour which had always characterised Roman punishment'.[31] By Late Antiquity, emphasis was put on the reform of the offender, generating the curative metaphors we encountered earlier: even serious offenders were now considered to be able to amend their ways. She also notes, as has Jill Harries before, the interesting similarities between the preambles of late ancient laws and Plato's own laws and more generally between this discourse on reform and Plato's thought.[32] Much more than earlier periods, late ancient thought considered punishment and the legal system to be educative. In this evolution, Hillner attributes a prime role to Christianity, which 'shifted the focus onto the offender'.[33] Even if she may be right in seeing Christianity as the main conduit for transmitting Platonic ideas (at least it is the Christian discourse that our sources transmit predominantly), a

[29] Hillner, *Prison*, 73. See also V. Neri, 'I cristiani e la giustizia penale: principi e prassi (sec. IV–V)', in C. Freu, S. Janniard and A. Ripoll (eds.), *Libera curiositas: mélanges d'histoire romaine et d'Antiquité tardive offerts à Jean-Michel Carrié* (Turnhout, 2016) 369–86.

[30] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21.11 (*CCSL* 48, pp. 777–78) does differentiate the Christian position from the Platonic one, stating that Platonists believe that punishment after this life is also educative. He alludes to the belief of Platonists in the continued improvement of the soul after the death of the body, leading to its return to the divine. This is, in fact, a difference in anthropology (Christians do not believe that souls transmigrate or continue their journey), not in the underlying conception of punishment.

[31] Hillner, *Prison*, 63.

[32] J. Harries, 'Superfluous Verbiage? Rhetoric and Law in the Age of Constantine and Julian', *JECS* 19 (2011) 345–74; Hillner, *Prison*, 28–37, 94.

[33] Hillner, *Prison*, 114.

striking absence in her account is Neoplatonic accounts: indeed, we encounter very similar views in the Neoplatonist pagans Sopater and Olympiodorus. Unless one wishes to believe that Neoplatonism was influenced by Christianity or that we see the accidental confluence of two separate traditions (Hellenism and Christianity), this suggests that the rise of the discourse of reform is linked to the rise of Platonism as the philosophical *koine* of Late Antiquity, a *koine* to which Christianity was also tributary.

Thus, Sopater and Augustine think alike not because they have reached the same summit by different routes, but because they partake in the same culture and intellectual tradition. The preceding pages have also shown something else: coercion is always conceptualised in relation to persuasion. Rational argument is the only means by which one can accept the truth and coercion can never be a substitute for it. Coercion enters the picture when argument is problematic, but even Plato's 'young tyrant' uses force *and* persuasion. Coercion, then, was not a problem in ancient thought: a real political community was always considered to apply a degree of coercion because individuals always fall short of the ideal. With this in mind, we can now turn to Augustine's justification of coercion. As we shall see, he did not change his views in the fundamental way sometimes asserted, nor is the issue at stake the justification of coercion as such. It is the source of coercion that is problematic.

Augustine on Coercion by the State

Early in the fifth century, Augustine justified the use of imperial legislation to force the Donatists into a return to the Catholic Church. By this time, the conflict between both groups had been dragging on for almost a century, having started with the disputed election of Caecilianus as bishop of Carthage in 311/12. The memory of past violence, kept alive by both sides, led to a poisoned climate. Faced with the violence perpetrated by the so-called *circumcelliones*, the Catholic episcopacy seems to have split between two options. A strict position seems to have been defended by the bishops living inland where violence was most intense. They demanded general imperial intervention against the Donatists. Bishops located on the coast, where violence was rare, seem to have advocated a reliance on persuasion and on limited measures against Donatist bishops judged responsible for the violence. In 405, Maximinus of Bagai arrived at the court of Ravenna, apparently on his own initiative. Having been beaten up by the Donatists himself, his story made a great impression

and a series of severe measures were decreed against them, in particular high fines and the confiscation of property.[34] Although imperial policy was far from consistent in the years to come, these measures can be seen as the starting point of a process that would lead to the final victory of the Catholic Church, with the culmination in the Conference of Carthage of 411.

The conflicting views in the African episcopate are best known through the correspondence of Augustine, who defended the anti-Donatist measures most elaborately in a letter to the Rogatist Bishop Vicentius (belonging to a Donatist faction) (*Letter* 93 [408]) and one to the military commander Boniface (*Letter* 185 [417]). He states explicitly that he was originally opposed to the use of imperial coercion: 'For I thought at first that no one can be forced to be united to Christ and that one had to act by words'.[35] This confessed change of heart, to which he also admits in his *Retractationes*,[36] has been judged severely in older scholarship. His desire to see Donatism disappear would have led him to a fundamental contradiction with his earlier doubts about the Roman state and introduced a fundamental incoherence in his own thought.[37] Worse still, as extracts of the letters were inserted into the *Decretum Gratianum*, the compilation of canon law of 1140, Augustine has even been called Father of the Inquisition – a more damming condemnation is hardly imaginable to a modern mind.[38] Such a judgement, as well as the feeling that these letters are a blot on Augustine's reputation, betray that his argument hurts our modern sensibilities: our appropriation of Augustine as a *maître à penser* for all ages reaches a painful limit.[39] Scholarship has added important

[34] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.5.38, 16.11.2, with C. Weidemann, 'Eine Intrige im katholischen Episkopat? Zum Anlass der antidonatistischen Gesetze von 405', in G. Förster et al. (eds.), *Spiritus et littera: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Cornelius Petrus Mayer OSA* (Würzburg, 2009) 391–403; B. D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011) 474–84.

[35] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.5.17 (*CSEL* 34.2, p. 461): *Nam mea primitus sententia non erat nisi neminem ad unitatem Christi esse cogendum verbo esse agendum.*

[36] Augustine, *Retractationes* 1.13.6 (*CCSL* 57, pp. 38–39).

[37] G. O. Willis, *Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London, 1950) 127–35; H. A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York, 1963) 216–19; E. Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration: An Intriguing Change of Mind in Augustine* (Villanova, 1975).

[38] References in Lamirande, *Church*, 70; P. van Geest, '*Timor est servus caritatis* (S. 156.13–14): Augustine's Vision on Coercion in the Process of Returning Heretics to the Catholic Church and His Underlying Principles', in A. Dupont, M. A. Gaumer and M. Lamberigts (eds.), *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity* (Leuven, 2015) 289–310, esp. p. 289 (n. 1).

[39] That it is seen as a stain on his reputation becomes clear from the defensive tone of recent papers by P. van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando vel non vindicando*? (Ep. 95, 3): Augustine's Legitimation of Coercion in the Light of his Roles of Mediator, Judge, Teacher and Mystagogue', in A. C. Geljon

nuance to such judgements. The situational character of the justification has been emphasised, leading to a view of Augustine, in this respect, as a 'pragmatic prelate' pursuing a pastoral strategy rather than a coherent thought.[40] Parallels with other texts have been highlighted, showing that Augustine held such ideas on coercion already in the 390s – which implies that his change of heart was less abrupt than it may seem.[41] Even if much scholarship still tends to assume a change of mind,[42] it has laid the groundwork for ascribing a greater coherence to Augustine's views than is usually accepted.[43] In fact, if we abandon the modern presupposition that coercion and rational argument are two mutually exclusive attitudes to religious difference, we are able to see that Augustine remains within the late ancient frame of thought as sketched in the first half of this chapter and to understand why the problem triggering the letters is not coercion itself but coercion by the state. This obviously does not mean that Augustine may not have changed his mind as to what was the best way to solve the Donatist problem, but this is not a change affecting the basic frame of thought – the deeper level with which I am concerned here.

The letters make abundantly clear that persuasion has logical, if not temporal priority over coercion. In fact, Augustine's confession of a change of heart rhetorically draws attention to the fact that his underlying position is still the same, namely that persuasion is the only real tool to bring about conversion: 'If they [the Donatists] were to be terrified and not instructed, that would seem an immoral tyranny'.[44] Instruction here indicates the use of rational argument showing that the Catholic position is the right one.

and R. Roukema (eds.), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators* (Leiden, 2014) 151–84, and '*Timor est servus caritatis*'.

[40] F. H. Russell, 'Persuading the Donatists: Augustine's Coercion by Words', in W. E. Klingshirn and M. Vessey (eds.), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, 1999) 115–30, esp. p. 129. See also Van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando*'. Russell takes inspiration from R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of Saint Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970) 132–53. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (London, 2000) 227, states that Augustine, as leader of a minority community faced with a Donatist majority, could not afford tolerance. This posits (modern) toleration as the normal attitude.

[41] P. Brown, 'Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire', repr. in his *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London, 1972) 301–31; G. Clark, 'Rod, Line and Net: Augustine on the Limits of Diversity', *Studies in Church History* 43 (2001) 80–99; Van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando*' and '*Timor est servus caritatis*'.

[42] Most recently, Van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando*', 160; M. A. Gaumer and A. Dupont, 'Donatist North Africa and the Beginning of Religious Coercion by Christians: A New Analysis', *La Ciudad de Dios* 223 (2010) 445–66.

[43] See already Markus, *Saeculum*, 132–53.

[44] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.1.3 (*CSEL* 34.2, p. 448): *si enim terrerentur et non docerentur, inproba quasi dominatio uideretur.*

Coercion without subsequent argument would suffer from the same weakness as when Plato added no preambles to his laws: the Donatists would have to submit to naked power without being able to rationally understand the correctness of the Catholic position. Power only touches the exterior of humans, whereas true conversion hinges on the free and rational acceptance of the truth. As Augustine says aphoristically in *De catechizandis rudibus*, 'faith is not a matter of a dancing body but of a believing soul'.[45]

If coercion remains embedded in a system of thought that attributes priority to persuasion and indeed underlines its necessity, why then accept the use of force? Augustine offers two reasons in the passage following the one I have just cited. First, 'if they were to be instructed and not terrified, they would move more slowly on to the road of salvation, obdurate by the long-term power of habit'. As we have seen above, bad habits were also singled out by philosophers as a barrier to rational argument. Second, 'the fear for the violent hostilities of evil men' (that is, the *circumcelliones*) renders the Donatists reluctant to join the Catholic Church, for, if they do, they fear retaliation.[46] This last factor is specific for Augustine's argumentation: in his view, Donatist violence has eliminated the mere possibility of starting a discussion and of letting persuasion work. Both reasons given by Augustine point to a common assumption about the role of coercion: it seeks to remove barriers to persuasion. Coercion is not an aim in itself, in line with what Augustine said in the first quotation from his works in this chapter,[47] but only prepares the ground for persuasion. The forced entry of Donatists into the Church is therefore an occasion to teach them the truth, in line with the general medical or pedagogical understanding of the process.[48] As in the earlier quotation, and in line with philosophical thought, Augustine emphasises that its exercise is limited by the

[45] Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 11.16.5–9 (*CCSL* 46, p. 140): *fides enim non res est saltantis corporis, sed credentis animi*.

[46] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.1.3 (*CSEL* 34.2, p. 448): *si enim terrerentur et non docerentur, inproba quasi dominatio uideretur. rursus si docerentur et non terrerentur, uetustate consuetudinis obdurati ad capessendam uiam salutis pigrius mouerentur, quando quidem multi, quod bene nouimus, reddita sibi ratione et manifestata diuinis testimoniis ueritate respondebant nobis cupere se in ecclesiae catholicae communionem transire, sed uiolentas perditorum hominum inimicitias formidare, quas quidem pro iustitia et pro aeterna uita utique contemnere debuerunt; sed talium infirmitas, donec firmi efficiantur, sustinenda est, non desperanda.*

[47] See above, p. 269.

[48] A point underscored by Russell, 'Persuading the Donatists'; Clark, 'Rod, Line and Net'; Van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando*', 170, and '*Timor est servus caritatis*', 320; E. Smither, 'Augustine, Missionary to Heretics? An Appraisal of Augustine's Missional Engagement with the Donatists', in Dupont, Gaumer and Lamberigts, *Uniquely African Controversy*, 269–88.

correctness of the intentions of the one applying the coercion and by the fact that it must be oriented towards the truth.[49] The use of 'truth' may run counter to modern presuppositions, according to which religious views have been banned to the realm of the rationally unjustifiable ('beliefs' or 'faith' rather than 'truth'). Yet, in antiquity, theology was a branch of philosophy and the subject of rational argument and justification. By Late Antiquity, one would not be wrong to state, theology was *the* locus of reason.

If Augustine's position is in line with general thought of the period and his own earlier positions, why did he then seek to provide ample justification for it? There is, obviously, the fact that the Donatists too claimed to possess the truth, necessitating a demonstration that the Catholic position is the correct one. Yet Augustine does not spend much time on setting out his theological stall, and rather deals with other objections. He addresses the problem of the so-called *ficti*, that is, individuals who pretended to be Catholics but were not. Indeed, if one forces the Donatists to enter the Catholic Church, they do not become Catholics overnight. They only pretend to be so, possibly for a long time. Yet *ficti* were not a problem for a community, for it always contained such individuals. In *De catechizandis rudibus*, Augustine accepts the permanent presence of *ficti* in a Christian community, because people may convert because of dishonest reasons, such as social advancement (for example, to seek a career in imperial administration) or social pressure (to marry a Christian wife). The preacher has to purify their heart and make them progress to the truth. This is hard work that may take a long time, for the seed sown may take a while to grow. Donatist *ficti* are, then, at best a problem of degree: if they were a large group or even the majority of a community, instruction would become very difficult. Augustine counters this problem with two clarifications. First, he alleges a great success in conversion among the Donatists who have been forced to enter. Especially since the clear defeat for the Donatists at the Conference of Carthage (411), so he claims, spontaneous and sincere conversion has taken place. Second, the problem of *ficti* is the price to pay to stop a much greater evil, namely the unbearable violence against the Catholics and Donatists who wish to convert to Catholicism.[50]

The real problem addressed by Augustine's so-called justification of coercion is not coercion itself, which was acceptable as long as it was

[49] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.2, 93.5.16 (*CSEL* 34.2, pp. 448–53, 461), 185.11.51 (*CSEL* 57, p. 44).
[50] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.13 (*CSEL* 34.2, pp. 494–96), 185.7.30 (*CSEL* 57, p. 28); *De catechizandis rudibus* 11.16.5–9 (*CCSL* 46, p. 140).

exercised by the leader of the community and embedded in a well-intentioned pedagogical process, nor was it the creation of *ficti*. Rather, it is the recourse to imperial power to solve a conflict internal to the Christian community.[51] In the two letters of Augustine that we are discussing, we encounter several objections that touch precisely on this issue. First, Donatists object that 'no example can be found in the Gospels or in the apostolic letters that something was asked for the Church from the earthly kings against the enemies of the Church'. Augustine responds: 'who denies that it cannot be found? But then this prophecy had not yet been fulfilled: "and now, kings, understand and be instructed, you who judge the earth. Serve the lord in fear" (Psalm 2:10)'.[52] For Augustine, it would have been unjustified to demand help from a pagan emperor, but because the world is becoming Christian, there are now Christian rulers. Augustine also tackles the Donatist objection in a less theological way: they too have demanded help from the rulers, and it is therefore hypocritical to claim that it is illegitimate if the Catholics do so.[53] Second, he underlines the fact that the imperial measures aim at correction and not punishment, and that they are therefore moderate in nature. He contrasts the anti-Donatist laws, which foresee fines and exile as punishment, with anti-pagan measures, which contain the death penalty. Their clemency, so Augustine says, has the aim of making the Donatists reflect on the reasons why they suffer such penalties and hence on the propaganda of their own camp. Indeed, because of the violence and the lies that have long circulated, it has become illusory to believe that the normal mechanism of debate and argument would be able to reunite both communities: habit is now too strong.[54] We encountered the motive of fear as a healthy emotion that can lead to the breaking of bad habits already in classical philosophy.

Augustine, then, suggests that the confluence between Church and state, due to the presence of Christian rulers, allows, exceptionally, the use of imperial coercion. This exception is due to the violence of the *circumcelliones* that disrupts the normal mechanism of persuasion and prevents it working. In that way, imperial coercion is seen to function in the same way as coercion applied by the leader of the community himself (that is, the bishop), yet it is needed given the exceptional circumstances.

[51] Van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando*', 153; Hillner, *Prison*, 78–80.

[52] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.3.9 (*CSEL* 34.2, p. 453): *non inuenitur exemplum in euangelicis et apostolicis litteris aliquid petitum a regibus terrae pro ecclesia contra inimicos ecclesiae. quis negat non inueniri? sed nondum implebatur illa prophetia: et nunc, reges, intellegite et erudimini, qui iudicatis terram; seruite domino in timore*.

[53] Augustine, *Epistulae* 93.4 (*CSEL* 34.2, pp. 456–61).

[54] Ibid., 93.3.9 (*CSEL* 34.2, p. 453).

Indeed, if the *circumcelliones* simply stop their violence out of fear of imperial punishment by the state, the normal process of persuasion can start again:

> [W]ho is so mad to deny that one is obliged to come to their help [that is, of well-intentioned Donatists] by imperial orders, so that they be freed from such an evil, whilst the others [the *circumcelliones*], whom they fear now, are forced to fear and by this very fear they [the *circumcelliones*] are themselves corrected, or, at least, when they feign to be corrected, keep away from the corrected [the well-intentioned Donatists], by whom they were feared before?[55]

Throughout his justification of coercion by the state, Augustine keeps coming back to the general framework of thought, according to which a community is oriented towards the good and its leader has the duty to take care that the community remains so. This implies an educative process that is primarily (logically and temporally) one of argument and persuasion, for only reasoned acceptance of the truth is possible. Coercion is possible within the community,[56] yet can only function as a means to remove obstacles to the reasoned acceptance of the truth: coercion itself never can produce a true conversion. In his writings, Augustine identifies various actors of *correctio* (correction) and *correptio* (reprimand), such as God himself (who corrected Paul on the road to Damascus), the Church or, as in this case, the state.[57] God obviously is a force for the good, and the Church, as long as it is orthodox, also aims at the good. The state, by contrast, is not by definition a force for the good: as Augustine's reference to Psalm 2 indicates, there was a time when rulers were not Christians. Even when they have become Christians, the state does not simply become acceptable as a means to regulate the life of the Church. Indeed, the state remains a different community from the Church, with different leaders, a different history and a different purpose. This is most visible in Augustine's awareness that a state official disposes of a wider range of punishments than a bishop, including measures such as the death penalty that are objectionable from an ecclesiastical perspective.[58] There is never a simple

[55] Augustine, *Epistulae* 185.3.13 (*CSEL* 57, p. 12): *quis est tam demens, qui neget istis debuisse per iussa imperialia subueniri, ut de tanto eruerentur malo, dum illi, quos timebant, timere coguntur et eodem timore aut etiam ipsi corriguntur aut certe, cum se correctos esse confingunt, correctis parcunt, a quibus antea timebantur?* Cf. *Epistulae* 185.4 (*CSEL* 57, pp. 13–17).

[56] On the normality of forms of coercion in communities, see J. Hillner, 'Monks and Children: Corporal Punishment in Late Antiquity', *European Review of History* 16 (2011) 773–91; Van Geest, '*Quid dicam de vindicando*', 153. On violence in general, J.-U. Krause, *Gewalt und Kriminalität in der Spätantike* (Munich, 2014).

[57] Van Bavel, 'Correctio' and 'Correptio'; Grossi, 'Correctio'.

[58] Rist, *Augustine*, 243.

identity between the two communities that would allow the state to interfere with the Church. The problem in appealing to state coercion, then, lies, in intellectual terms, in the fact that one has recourse to another community to resolve problems that are internal to one's own. As Augustine indicates, coercion by the state in Church matters can only be justified if the state laws are inspired by the truthful good. Yet acceptance of state authority remains, for Augustine, always conditional: 'Consider who commands, who is commanded, and what is commanded'.[59] Acceptance of coercion by the state is thus, by definition, provisional, for one can never be sure the state has the same good in mind as the Church.

Older scholarship has tended to emphasise the change in Augustine's position. The present analysis, which argues that Augustine remained true to a single framework of thought, does not necessarily conflict with such a view, as long as one is clear about what changes. It is wrong to think Augustine changed on the substance of his view: he did not shift from a 'tolerant' position to an 'intolerant' one. There is no change in the basic presuppositions of his position: there is no point, for example, when he believes that coercion can generate true belief. Coercion remains a secondary means to eliminate obstacles to a free acceptance of the truth. Rather, we see Augustine emphasising different elements within the framework, largely in function of the precise circumstances. Unsurprisingly, justification of state coercion occurs at a time when, in the Catholic perception, the conflict with the Donatists has become extremely violent.

Crucially, coercion itself is not the problem: what worried Augustine's interlocutors was coercion by the state in Church matters. We can now also understand better why the problem is articulated by Augustine so expressly in the context of the Donatist conflict and not concerning anti-pagan and anti-Jewish laws – measures that are, by modern scholarship, often lumped together. In the communal logic that underpins Late Antique reasoning,[60] state laws against pagans and Jews do not intervene

[59] Augustine, *Epistulae* 185.2.8 (*CSEL* 57, p. 7); *Sermones Dolbeau* 3.14–15 (p. 338 Dolbeau): *videte quis iubebat, cui iubebat, quid iubebat*.

[60] There is a broader background to the espousal by the Church of the self-understanding of a philosophical community, which we can only sketch here. J. Rüpke, *From Jupiter to Christ: On the History of Religion in the Roman Imperial Period* (Oxford, 2014), has argued that the nature of religion changes in the Roman empire and that it starts to relate to the entire breadth of human life. P. Athanassiadi and C. Macris, 'La philosophisation du religieux', in L. Bricault and C. Bonnet (eds.), *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Roman Empire* (Leiden, 2013) 41–84, have in turn highlighted the impact of philosophy on ancient religion under the empire (cf. P. Van Nuffelen, *Rethinking the Gods: Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post-Hellenistic Period* [Cambridge, 2011]). J. North, 'The Development of Religious Pluralism', in J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians* (London, 1992) 174–93, has argued for a social

in the Christian community. Obviously, if they provoke conversion, they have an effect on that community, and they may reflect the symbolic superiority of the Church among the various communities, but they regard communities that remain outside the Christian one. The Donatist conflict was, by contrast, a rift within the Christian community, to which the state was, by definition, alien.

Conclusions

Augustine has sometimes been depicted as letting the cat out of the sack and opening the door for future state coercion.[61] In fact, he has, in his typical way, explored issues that were common in his time, remaining within the bounds of the thought of his period. That thought was, in turn, tributary to earlier philosophical ideas. What his letters clearly show, however, is that the fault line around which the discourse on coercion clusters is not the mere fact of coercion, but rather its source and, from an ecclesiastical perspective, in particular the use of state coercion for intra-communal problems. That this would be the moot point becomes clear against the background of the communal logic, derived from classical philosophy, that underpinned the self-understanding of communities and of their leaders. As the crucial and recurring problem, it receives massive attention in our sources: much space in the late ancient Church histories is taken up by justifying or rejecting state interference. Unjustified coercion by the state is easily labelled persecution, a highly charged term in late ancient sources.[62] In the end, Augustine does little more than extensively justify that he remains within the boundaries of what was morally acceptable in his age. Ordinary coercion by a bishop towards his flock is, by contrast, less visible in the sources. Unsurprisingly, a discourse generates visibility by imposing a meaning and a valuation on events. We cannot reconstruct the past if we are not fully aware of the fact that our sources

change in the make-up of imperial religions, which become more structured around new communities. J. Rüpke, *Religious Deviance in the Roman World: Superstition or Individuality?* (Cambridge, 2016), has linked this to the changing definition of religious deviance, which becomes more clearly articulated in later Antiquity. I have limited myself here to the perspective of intellectual history. For further reflection on how scholars have linked the rise of more structured religious communities with the development of the concept of religion itself, see Bendlin, this volume, pp. 139–41.

[61] M. Gaddis, *'There Is no Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2006) 133.

[62] See P. Van Nuffelen, 'Religious Violence in Late Antiquity', in G. G. Fagan et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2020) 512–29.

never merely reflect reality but construct and valuate it.[63] In addition, the apparent similarity of the issue at stake with the origins of modern toleration (the problematic nature of state intervention in religious communities) has ensured continued attention in scholarship – indeed, given the importance of Patristic texts for arguments during the Reformation, it is not far off the mark to say that modern discussions of toleration, which circle around the role of the state, have late ancient roots.

If, then, Augustine, in a way, has set the terms for modern debates, modern presuppositions risk obscuring our analysis of late ancient ideas about coercion, as they do for the wider concepts of 'religion' and 'violence'.[64] In this chapter, I have addressed one of these, namely the assumption that coercion and persuasion are mutually exclusive attitudes towards religious difference and that the former is an illicit and the latter an acceptable position. For us, coercion infringes on an individual's freedom, a cornerstone of a modern anthropology. Yet in Antiquity virtue, not freedom, was the highest aspiration of humans: a freedom that consists in not doing good is an evil. Moreover, the progress towards virtue was not an individual's road, but took place in dialogue with a master and a community. Crucially, the ultimate ends of one's life were the object of rational analysis, just as was discussion about things divine. If it has been said that in a modern state toleration is necessary for religious ideas because they cannot be debated rationally,[65] in Late Antiquity, religion was a locus of reason. Awareness of such fundamentally different presuppositions about individual and society may help us to avoid studying late ancient coercion as just another instalment of the historically unchanging problem of 'toleration'.

[63] This platitude bears repeating, especially when one is dealing with a topic like toleration that is central to modern self-understanding. For its application to religious violence, see P. Van Nuffelen '"A Wise Madness": A Virtue-Based Model for Crowd Behaviour in Late Antiquity', in W. Mayer and C. L. de Wet (eds.), *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* (London, 2018) 234–58, and 'Religious Violence'.

[64] See n. 3 above.

[65] J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford, 1971) 213.

CHAPTER 12

*Crowd Behaviour and the Destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/392 CE**

Jitse H. F. Dijkstra

> . . . a city which on its own impulse, and without ground, is frequently roused to rebellion and rioting.[1]

Introduction

The riotous behaviour by crowds towards other crowds, individuals, buildings or objects is considered in many studies to be a main component of 'religious violence' in Late Antiquity.[2] Yet these studies often fail sufficiently to take into account three, interrelated points. The first is that the, mostly Christian, sources typically describe the incidents in stark antithetical terms depending on the author's agenda ('pagan'–Christian, Arian–'orthodox', miaphysite–Chalcedonian and so on). The resulting black-and-white picture tends towards exaggeration and overemphasises the religious antithesis.[3] A second point is that despite the focus in the sources on religious differences in reality – as with religious violence in general – almost always other factors were in play.[4] In an important study,

* My warmest thanks to Jan Bremmer, Richard Burgess and Geoffrey Greatrex for comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus 22.11.4: . . . *in civitate quae suopte motu et ubi causae non suppetunt, seditionibus crebris agitatur et turbulentis*; trans. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb.

[2] See e.g. R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, 1997); M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2005).

[3] Cf. e.g. the diametrically opposed views on the *staurotheis* riot at Constantinople in 511 as found in Theodore Lector 483–86 (*GCS* NF 3, pp. 137–38) = Theophanes, *Chronographia* (p. 154 De Boor) and the quite graphic letter by Severus of Antioch to Soterichus of Caesarea, preserved in Coptic (ed. G. Garitte, 'Fragments coptes d'une lettre de Sévère d'Antioche à Sotérichos de Césarée', *Muséon* 65 [1952] 185–98), each blaming the opposing camp for the violence. For an English translation of the latter text and a detailed study of the riot, see G. B. Greatrex and J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'Patriarchs and Politics in Constantinople in the Reign of Anastasius (with a Reedition of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 59)', *Millennium* 6 (2009) 223–64.

[4] See the General Introduction, p. 4, and Kippenberg, p. 45, both this volume.

Johannes Hahn has demonstrated that cases of religious violence, including riots, in large cities such as Alexandria and Antioch have to be seen in a broader socio-political context. A good example of this is the lynching of George of Cappadocia in 361, which cannot be explained solely in terms of a 'pagan'–Christian conflict and had a variety of causes, set in motion by the emperor's appointment of this controversial Arian bishop in 357.[5]

This brings us to our third point, that it is artificial to separate riots that are primarily described as religiously motivated from similar actions that are not. The complex social fabric of the major cities in the Late Antique East, with their huge populations, had a large potential to cause conflict and not infrequently led to explosions of violence, from the Riot of the Statues at Antioch in 387, in which a rowdy crowd took out its anger over tax increases on the imperial statues, to the Nika riot at Constantinople in 532, which started with demands for the release of two prisoners, one from the Greens and another from the Blues, and developed into an outright revolt against the emperor.[6] Consequently, there is no reason to see these as any different from 'religious riots'. In studying such riots in Late Antiquity, then, while being sensitive to the ideological agenda of our sources and their proneness to highlight religious aspects, we do best to treat them in a wider, urban context of violent crowd behaviour.[7]

In this chapter we will take these three points to heart in focusing on one of the most famous cases of religious violence in Late Antiquity, the so-called 'destruction' of the Serapeum. In 391 or 392 – the exact year still remains unknown – a minor incident led to riots that quickly centred on the temple of Sarapis, the largest and most beautiful temple of the city of

[5] J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (Berlin, 2004) 66–74, summarised in his 'The Challenge of Religious Violence: Imperial Ideology and Policy in the Fourth Century', in J. Wienand (ed.), *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD* (New York, 2015) 379–404 at 388.

[6] Riot of the Statues: e.g. D. R. French, 'Rhetoric and the Rebellion of AD 387 in Antioch', *Historia* 47 (1998) 468–84; H. Leppin, 'Steuern, Aufstand und Rhetoren: Der Antiochener Steueraufstand von 387 in christlicher und heidnischer Deutung', in H. Brandt (ed.), *Gedeutete Realität: Krisen, Wirklichkeiten, Interpretationen (3.–6. Jh. n.Chr.)* (Stuttgart, 1999) 103–23. Nika riot: G. B. Greatrex, 'The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal', *JHS* 117 (1997) 60–86; M. Meier, 'Die Inszenierung einer Katastrophe: Justinian und der Nika-Aufstand', *ZPE* 142 (2003) 273–300; R. Pfeilschifter, *Der Kaiser und Konstantinopel: Kommunikation und Konfliktaustrag in einer spätantiken Metropole* (Berlin, 2013) 178–210.

[7] As advocated by P. Van Nuffelen, '"A Wise Madness": A Virtue-Based Model for Crowd Behaviour in Late Antiquity', in W. Mayer and C. L. de Wet (eds.), *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* (London, 2018) 234–58 at 234; see also, from a wider perspective, his 'Religious Violence in Late Antiquity', in G. G. Fagan et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2020) 512–29 at 516–18.

Alexandria, and resulted in the definitive end of its cults.[8] As early as 392, Jerome mentions that one of his students, Sophronius, 'has recently written a significant book about the overthrowing of Sarapis',[9] and the incident was soon recognised as one of the major events of the fourth century and a defining moment in Theophilus of Alexandria's episcopate (385–412).[10] While Sophronius' work has not been preserved, we do have accounts by the sophist Eunapius, and the Church historians Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, of which the first two were written when Theophilus was still alive, the latter three around the mid-fifth century.[11]

Numerous studies have been devoted to piecing together a chain of events from these to a large degree problematic and conflicting sources. Yet none of these studies fully succeeds in incorporating the three points raised above. Moreover, surprisingly, no one has looked at what we know about crowd behaviour and how such behaviour can spiral out of control, even though significant recent advances have been made on the topic in social psychology. In this chapter, then, we will begin by looking at the current state of knowledge on crowd behaviour and how social psychological models can be applied to ancient sources. In the second section, we will review the most important discussions of the incident to date, arguing that it would be best to base our analysis on the account by Rufinus. Building on the insights gained, the third, and last, section will analyse what the most plausible scenario is of how the events unfolded, thus showing the benefits of social psychological models for our understanding of crowd behaviour in Late Antiquity.

Crowd Behaviour and Social Psychological Models

Every survey of crowd psychology should start with the seminal work of Gustave le Bon (1841–1931), *Psychologie des foules*.[12] Written in 1895, at a

[8] On the date of the events, see n. 40 below.

[9] Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 134 (p. 55 Richardson): *nuper de subversione Serapis insignem librum conposuit.*

[10] As well laid out by E. J. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley, 2010) 190–215.

[11] Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum* 6.107–13 (pp. 39–41 Goulet); Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22–23 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1025–30); Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.16–17 (*GCS* NF 1, pp. 289–91); Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.15.2–10 (*GCS* NF 4, pp. 319–21); Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.22 (*GCS* NF 5, pp. 320–21).

[12] The following is based on the surveys by R. Brown, *Group Processes: Dynamics within and between Groups*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2000) 1–21 and, especially, S. Reicher, 'The Psychology of Crowd Dynamics', in M. A. Hogg and R. S. Tindale (eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Processes* (Oxford, 2001) 182–208.

time of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, and in the aftermath of the traumatic first years of the French Third Republic, the booklet reads like a primer for *hommes d'état*, setting out in clear terms what a crowd is and how it can be manipulated. According to Le Bon, when individuals become part of a crowd they transform into irrational, primitive beings that – as a collective, being subject to 'l'âme des foules' – act on impulse and can easily be swayed and excited: 'par le fait seul qu'il fait partie d'une foule organisée, l'homme descend de plusieurs degrés sur l'échelle de la civilisation. Isolé, c'était peut-être un individu cultivé, en foule c'est un barbare, c'est-à-dire un instinctif'.[13] The 'group mind' theory has wielded a tremendous influence, not only on such figures as Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) and, notoriously, Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), but also within social psychology, in particular on the deindividuation model developed by Philip Zimbardo in 1969, which holds that certain factors, especially anonymity, make people in crowds more liable to lose their former self and display anti-social behaviour.[14] The theory was modified by, among others, Edward Diener, who speaks of crowd members as having a lower 'objective self-awareness'.[15]

Another major strand of research on crowd behaviour originated in opposition to the 'group mind' theory and is associated with Floyd Allport (1890–1979). In his classic introduction *Social Psychology* (1924), Allport firmly directs the attention back to the individual, whose behaviour in a crowd is governed not by some abstract 'mind' but only by his or her own. In consequence, the behaviour of a crowd is nothing but the sum of its parts: 'the individual in the crowd behaves just as he would behave alone, only more so'. In particular this aspect of Allport's work has given rise to numerous subsequent studies, which try to reduce crowds to individualistic traits. Yet Allport also thinks that the more people join a crowd the greater the chance that an individual will lapse to a more instinctual state – which comes close to Le Bon's idea that a person experiences a loss of control when joining a crowd.[16] Whether one concentrates on the crowd or the individual within a crowd, however,

[13] G. le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris, 1895) 20.
[14] P. G. Zimbardo, 'The Human Choice: Individuation, Reason, and Order vs. Deindividuation, Impulse, and Chaos', in W. J. Arnold and D. Levine (eds.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 1969* (Lincoln, 1969) 237–307.
[15] E. Diener, 'Deindividuation: Causes and Consequences', *Social Behavior and Personality* 5 (1977) 143–55, and 'Deindividuation: The Absence of Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation in Group Members', in P. B. Paulus (ed.), *Psychology of Group Influence* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1980) 209–42.
[16] F. H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston, 1924) 4–9, 292–319 (quote at p. 295).

the central problem with both approaches remains that they ignore the link between individual and society.

Since the 1950s, scholars have tried to bridge the divide by studying the social aspects of the crowd. One theory, developed by sociologists, holds that crowds are not uniform and consist by definition of people with different perspectives. Since collective behaviour often takes place in an ambiguous situation, crowd members interact with each other to resolve the situation. In the process, some people are more prominent than others, the 'keynoters', who influence the deliberation. As a result, a new norm of behaviour arises, which gives the theory its name: 'emergent norm theory'.[17] The model is slightly unsatisfactory, however, as it focuses mostly on relations within a group and omits larger social factors. More encompassing is social identity theory, pioneered by Henri Tajfel (1919–82) and John Turner (1947–2011) in the 1970s and 1980s.[18] This model stipulates that when crowds gather, almost always for a specific purpose, individuals define themselves as members of a certain social category (their social identity) and expect others to conform to it as well, while 'group norms are inferred from the comments and actions of those seen as typical group members'.[19] At the same time, the feeling of belonging to a certain group (the 'ingroup') leads to a juxtaposition with another group (the 'outgroup'), often involving some measure of stereotyping ('us'–'them' thinking) and a sense of empowerment, even in the face of fierce opposition or punishment. The latter aspect has been seized upon to elaborate the model in order to better understand how, depending on the circumstances, crowd behaviour may develop and spiral out of control. Thus social identity theory provides a particularly dynamic model of intra- and intergroup behaviour, which demonstrates that participation in a crowd does not lead to a loss of identity, but rather to a change to the relevant social identity, thereby successfully restoring the link between individual and society.

Despite these major advances in social psychological approaches to crowd behaviour, their application has been slow in coming in ancient

[17] R. H. Turner and L. M. Killian, *Collective Behavior*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1987); the book was first published in 1957.

[18] E.g. H. Tajfel (ed.), *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London, 1978); J. Turner and H. Giles (eds.), *Intergroup Behaviour* (Oxford, 1981); H. Tajfel (ed.), *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge, 1982), H. Tajfel and J. Turner, 'The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior', in S. Worchel and W. G. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Chicago, 1986) 7–24.

[19] Reicher, 'Psychology of Crowd Dynamics', 195.

history. An exception is the recent book by Garrett Fagan,[20] in which he makes extensive use of social psychological theory in order to gain insight into the behaviour and mentality of crowds watching violent games in the Roman arena. Fagan offers a solid overview of current ideas on crowd psychology and applies these to a riot that occurred between crowds from Nuceria and Pompeii in the latter's arena in 59 CE and, in the remainder of the book, to the typically more passive behaviour of the crowd and what they experienced at the games. In this way, even though he is well aware of the limitations of and the bias in the sources, Fagan succeeds in showing the applicability of social psychological models to the ancient sources.[21] In the footsteps of Fagan, this methodology has now also been adopted in a study of violent crowd behaviour in Late Antique Rome. On the basis of three case studies, all from the fourth century CE, it again demonstrates the usefulness of modern theories for laying bare the complexity of crowd behaviour.[22] The time seems ripe, therefore, to add further case studies of crowd behaviour within a social psychological framework.[23] Before we will undertake such a study of the Serapeum incident, however, we will first review how previous scholars have interpreted the event.

Previous Scholarship on the Serapeum Incident

As befits a major historical event, a myriad of studies has been devoted to the Serapeum incident and we will concentrate here only on the three most important ones, published in each of the past three decades. The main study of Rufinus' continuation of the *Church History* of Eusebius, including the Alexandria passage, remains Françoise Thelamon's magisterial *Païens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle* (1981). In her *magnum opus*, Thelamon reacts against previous scholars who dismissed Rufinus as a

[20] Another, earlier, such study is P. J. J. Vanderbroeck, *Popular Leadership and Collective Behavior in the Late Roman Republic (ca. 80–50 BC)* (Amsterdam, 1987), which is largely framed around emergent norm theory (see esp. pp. 10–16).

[21] G. G. Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games* (Cambridge, 2009), esp. pp. 3–4, 39–48 (on the applicability of social psychology to the ancient world), 10–12 (on the bias in and limitations of the sources), 80–93 (overview of social psychological literature), and 93–96 (Pompeii riot).

[22] D. Slootjes, 'Crowd Behavior in Late Antique Rome', in M. R. Salzman, M. Sághy and R. Lizzi Testa (eds.), *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge, 2015) 178–94.

[23] Cf. Van Nuffelen, 'Wise Madness', 234–35, who is sceptical of applying modern theories to ancient evidence. While I agree that we have to be careful in doing so, I am convinced that such models can help in providing a more nuanced picture of crowd behaviour in Late Antiquity. Van Nuffelen goes on by studying the representation of crowd behaviour in Late Antique sources in terms of a moral relationship between crowd and leader, which is another useful avenue of research.

historical source because of his tendency to the miraculous and the anecdotal. As she rightly asserts, such judgements rest on a fundamental misunderstanding of the work, which is not meant to be a historical document, at least not in the modern sense, but is rather intended to document salvation history from its origins until the present, first by translating Eusebius' *Church History* in nine books, then by adding two more books to continue it to Rufinus' own time.[24] In taking this ideological discourse into account, 'au carrefour de l'hagiographie et de l'histoire', important historical details can still be gleaned from Rufinus' work, though we should always be aware of the context and the author's intention with those elements, as is demonstrated by Thelamon with great nuance in the remainder of the book.[25]

A case in point is the Alexandria passage, which Thelamon treats extensively in Part II of her work.[26] As she points out, Rufinus represents the victorious battle against 'paganism' as one of the main achievements of the fourth century and the realisation of God's plan for the world, culminating in the decisive Christian triumph of Theodosius at the Battle of the Frigidus in 394 that concludes the *Church History* (11.31–34). Within this overall programme, the Alexandria passage, which immediately precedes the account of the Frigidus battle (11.22–30), holds a key position at the end of the work, showing in an exemplary fashion how the cults and practices of this city, especially symbolised in the Serapeum, are overturned by Christianity; in the events Theodosius is again assigned a prominent role.[27] The passage is therefore written from a clear polemical and apologetical perspective.[28] Yet at the same time, in his zeal to unravel the depravity of the ancient religion, Rufinus also provides detailed information about it, such as the existence of the ritual of the Sun kissing

[24] On the unity of the work as a whole, see also M. Humphries, 'Rufinus's Eusebius: Translation, Continuation, and Edition in the Latin *Ecclesiastical History*', *JECS* 16 (2008) 143–64.

[25] F. Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle: l'apport de l'"Histoire ecclésiastique" de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Paris, 1981), quote at p. 26. Cf. also pp. 459–60: 'Sous-tendu par cette théologie chrétienne de l'histoire, le récit de Rufin se présente sous le double aspect d'un récit historiographique qui raconte des événements qui ont réellement eu lieu, et d'un discours hagiographique qui emploie ces mêmes événements comme des éléments sémantiques'.

[26] Ibid., 157–279.

[27] Ibid., 159: 'Pour montrer, de façon frappante pour le lecteur, l'inanité des croyances païennes et finalement l'échec de l'erreur des païens qui aboutit, sous le règne de Théodose, au triomphe du christianisme, Rufin a choisi un cas exemplaire'.

[28] This results in sweeping statements such as that, in the wake of the destruction of the cult statue of Sarapis, all such statues in Alexandria were destroyed (Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.24 [*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1030.16–18]) and that the same happened to all temples in Alexandria, and even the whole of Egypt (Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.28 [*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1034.18–26]).

Sarapis at the Serapeum.[29] Thus despite the significant distortion that the material has undergone to fit the author's agenda, the passage contains many nuggets of historical interest.[30]

In her analysis of the Alexandria passage, Thelamon concentrates especially on elements that tell us something about Egyptian cults and practices.[31] She does not systematically investigate the historical veracity of the events leading up to the destruction of the cult statue of Sarapis, described at the beginning of the account (11.22–23), and focuses mostly on their representation by Rufinus.[32] Since then two studies have appeared that attempt to reconstruct these events. The first of these is Christopher Haas' *Alexandria in Late Antiquity* (1997), to date the only book-length synthesis on Egypt's capital in this period. At first sight, it looks highly promising for our purposes, as Haas is particularly interested in the 'competition for cultural hegemony' among 'ethno-religious groups' (by which he means Jews, 'pagans' and Christians) in the fourth and fifth centuries, as seen within the city's urban fabric.[33] However, as several reviewers have noted, the book suffers from various methodological problems, such as a lack of definition of the terms used. More importantly, his treatment of the sources is superficial and often uncritical.[34] A good example of this is his description of the Serapeum incident, in which he basically follows Rufinus' narrative, while adding elements from the other sources.[35]

A much more thorough assessment of the evidence is offered by Johannes Hahn in his *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt* (2004). As already remarked in the introduction, his work draws attention to the socio-political context of instances of religious violence in the Late Antique East,

[29] Ibid., 11.23 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1027–28), on which see F. Thelamon, 'Sérapis et le baiser du Soleil: les "truquages" du Sérapeum d'Alexandrie selon Rufin et Quodvultdeus', *Antichità altoadriatiche* 5 (1974) 227–50, and *Païens et chrétiens*, 181–85, 194–99.

[30] Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 279: 'Le "dossier" présenté a pour but d'étayer la démonstration, il est à la fois polémique et apologétique; ceci implique que, d'une part, il peut nous fournir de multiples informations qui, comparées à d'autres sources, se révèlent exactes et pleines d'intérêt, mais que, d'autre part, il convient d'apprécier le gauchissement qu'elles peuvent subir en raison de l'utilisation qui en est faite'.

[31] In some instances, she seems to me to go a little too far in demonstrating an Egyptian background for elements in the narrative, for example, when she discusses (pp. 231–34) Rufinus' accusations of human sacrifice in Alexandrian temples, Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.24 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1030–31), which – as she knows full well – is a common *topos* in anti-'pagan' discourse.

[32] Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 246–57.

[33] C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, 1997) 14: 'the constant interplay among the built environment, the socioeconomic and political structures of the city, and the ongoing competition for cultural hegemony'.

[34] For these points, see e.g. the excellent review by A. Papaconstantinou in *JEA* 89 (2003) 295–97.

[35] Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 159–69.

including the Serapeum incident.[36] It does not come as a surprise, then, that he sees the events of 391/92 not as a spontaneous outbreak of violence, but as the result of a build-up of tension in the previous years, even though this process remains difficult to trace in the sources.[37] Hahn also argues against directly connecting the edict of 16 June 391, addressed to the *praefectus augustalis* Evagrius and *comes Aegypti* Romanus in Alexandria and forbidding sacrifice and the access to temples,[38] with the Serapeum incident, as was so often done in previous scholarship.[39] He rightly regards the former as only a *terminus post quem* for the latter, which must have taken place between 16 June 391 and 8 April 392, the last possible day for Evagrius to be in office, though Hahn's subsequent attempt to further pinpoint the date in the first months of 392, mainly on the basis of the so-called 'Alexandrian World Chronicle', has since been refuted.[40] Based on these premises he takes a fresh new look at the sources.[41]

Hahn's is definitely the most in-depth study of the sources so far, yet it does not fully convince in two ways.[42] In the first place, he is hypercritical of the account by Rufinus while at the same time placing great trust in the one by Socrates. Though Rufinus indeed seems to have invented some elements to embellish his story, such as the mini-persecutions to which captured Christians who refuse to sacrifice are subjected in the Serapeum,[43] there is no reason to dismiss the passage as a whole – exactly

[36] Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 78–101. See also his 'The Conversion of the Cult Statues: The Destruction of the Serapeum 392 AD and the Transformation of Alexandria into the "Christ-Loving" City', in J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (eds.), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2008) 335–65.

[37] Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 78–81.

[38] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.11.

[39] Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 81–84. The idea remains persistent, as appears e.g. from A. Martin, 'Sarapis et les chrétiens d'Alexandrie: un réexamen', in C. Décobert and J.-Y. Empereur (eds.), *Alexandrie médiévale*, vol. 3 (Cairo, 2008) 41–57 at 47, 54, which completely ignores Hahn's study and, despite some interesting comments on the sources, is thus a step backwards.

[40] J. Hahn, '*Vetustus error extinctus est*: Wann wurde das Sarapeion von Alexandria zerstört?', *Historia* 55 (2006) 368–83, with the refutation of the more specific date by R. W. Burgess and J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'The "Alexandrian World Chronicle", Its *Consularia* and the Date of the Destruction of the Serapeum (with an Appendix on the *Praefecti Augustales*)', *Millennium* 10 (2013) 39–113 at 96–102, summarised in J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'The "Alexandrian World Chronicle": Place in the Late Antique Chronicle Traditions, Date and Historical Implications', in T. Derda et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 2016) 535–47 at 543–46.

[41] Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 85–94.

[42] J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered: The Cases of Alexandria, Panopolis and Philae', *Journal of Early Christian History* 6 (2015) 24–48 at 32–33 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 211–33 at 213–15), on which the following is based.

[43] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1025.25–29), with Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 251.

the kind of biased judgement against which Thelamon has warned.[44] Socrates' version, on the other hand, is much more difficult to fathom as it starts from an imperial edict that allows Theophilus to destroy the temples of Alexandria, which lacks any historical basis, and riots break out only after the Serapeum is destroyed.[45] The second point that can be raised against Hahn's analysis is that he takes all sources together, evidently preferring Socrates and adding elements from the other accounts, in order to come to a coherent, though somewhat vague, picture of the events.[46] However, a better historical method of analysis is to study the sources chronologically, beginning with the earliest account, that of Eunapius of 399, and in doing so highlight their interrelations in detail.[47] From such a study it clearly appears that all later accounts are derived from Rufinus (401/402) and that the order of events as he describes them is the most plausible one.[48] Consequently, the following analysis will be primarily based on this account,[49] while constantly keeping in mind the author's ideological agenda.

Crowd Behaviour and the Serapeum Incident

Rufinus starts his account with a conflict that erupts over a project initiated by Theophilus to renovate a ruined public building, a *basilica*, which had

[44] Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 88: 'Der im Werk Rufins bewahrte Bericht . . . verdient nicht das Vertrauen, das ihm in der Forschung allgemein geschenkt wird'.

[45] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.16 (*GCS* NF 1, pp. 289–90).

[46] Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 91: 'Das ganze Spektrum der Aussagen der christlichen und heidnischen Überlieferung zum Geschehen in Alexandria im Jahr 392 läßt sich am schlüssigsten unter der Annahme in Einklang bringen, daß eine – bewußt provozierte oder spontan ausgebrochene – Revolte heidnischer Kreise von dem alexandrinischen Bischof und dem ihm verbündeten kaiserlichen Beamten vor Ort dazu genutzt wurde, um unter dem Vorwand der Niederschlagung bürgerkriegsähnlicher Zustände die gesamte heidnische Infrastruktur zu zerstören und so dem lokalen Heidentum dauerhaft die kultische Basis zu entziehen'.

[47] A comprehensive study of the sources along these lines is in preparation by the author, as announced in Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered', 33 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 215).

[48] In basic outline, the account of Socrates is a condensed version of Rufinus, in which the latter's imperial rescript is turned into an edict to destroy all Alexandrian temples and moved to the beginning, no doubt to provide a clearer cause for the destruction of the Serapeum, while that of Sozomen mostly follows Rufinus but takes over some elements from Socrates. Theodoret's version starts from an outright empire-wide edict to destroy temples, focuses mostly on Theophilus and elaborates Rufinus' scene of the striking of the cult statue. The only earlier account, that by Eunapius, while important for offering a non-Christian perspective on the events, does not describe these in any detail and only puts the blame on Theophilus, Evagrius and Romanus for destroying the Serapeum.

[49] We will supplement Rufinus' account with the information that Socrates has added to his account about his teachers Helladius and Ammonius.

been donated to the Church by Constantius II (337–61), and turn it into a Christian place of worship.[50] Rufinus' depiction seems to give the impression that the outbreak of violence was rather spontaneous, but as we have seen such incidents hardly ever occur in isolation. In general, we can point to the long history of urban violence in the city, hinted at by Rufinus himself in his opening words ('In Alexandria meanwhile fresh disturbances broke out . . .'),[51] such as the mentioned riots leading up to the lynching of George three decades earlier.[52] As for a more immediate socio-political context, it is clear that the increasingly repressive imperial legislation against religious groups that were not (orthodox) Christian from the 380s onwards did not have empire-wide application, as has often been thought, and was only programmatic, but it could no doubt lead to, or increase, tensions and left bishops significant wiggle room to exploit the situation.[53] When the law forbidding sacrifice and the access to temples of 16 June 391, possibly relying on local initiative, arrived in Alexandria in July or August,[54] it must have created a potentially volatile atmosphere, in which the eventual outbreak of violence can be well imagined.[55]

During the construction work some subterranean rooms or caves are discovered that were used in the past for religious purposes. The 'pagans', ashamed that 'the dens of their iniquity and caverns of their offenses' are revealed, start behaving aggressively towards the Christians. Street fighting ensues and soon both parties are 'at open war'.[56] Rufinus thus squarely places the blame for starting the hostilities on the 'pagans'. It is unlikely, however, that feelings of guilt were the real reason why the demonstrators came together, as Rufinus tries to portray the 'pagans' in as negative a light

[50] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1025.7–14).

[51] Ibid., 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1025.7): *Interea apud Alexandriam novi motus . . . concitantur.* All translations of Rufinus' account are taken from P. R. Amidon, *Rufinus of Aquileia: History of the Church* (Washington, 2016), with some slight modifications.

[52] Above, p. 287. Cf. also the riot between Greeks and Judaeans of 38 CE, discussed by Bremmer, this volume, pp. 52–56.

[53] See J. Hahn, 'Gesetze als Waffe? Die kaiserliche Religionspolitik und die Zerstörung der Tempel', in J. Hahn (ed.), *Spätantiker Staat und religiöser Konflikt: Imperiale und lokale Verwaltung und die Gewalt gegen Heiligtümer* (Berlin, 2011) 201–20, esp. p. 215: 'Als programmatische Verlautbarung kaiserlicher Religionspolitik bedeutete sie [i.e. imperial legislation] in der Realität der Reichsverwaltung eben nicht die zwingende Richtschnur konsequenten administrativen Handelns in allen Regionen und Städten des Imperiums. Allerdings bot sie beachtliche Spielräume zum Tätigwerden vor Ort, entsprechende Konstellationen, Initiativen und Einflussmöglichkeiten vorausgesetzt'.

[54] Burgess and Dijkstra, 'Alexandrian World Chronicle', 102 (n. 234).

[55] Similarly, N. B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994) 332–33.

[56] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1025.14–22); quotes from ll. 16–17: *criminum suorum latebras et flagitiorum cavernas*, and l. 21: *belloque aperto.*

as possible and in opposition to the Christians. This also appears from how they fight: the 'pagans' are aggressive but the Christians, even though they have the numbers, are 'less violent by religious restraint'.[57] Moreover, when the 'pagans' retreat to the Serapeum they commit the very crimes that their ancestors had committed in the discovered underground places with which it all began.[58] Given that Rufinus clearly constructs his story here in 'pagan'–Christian terms, we should be careful in taking these remarks too literally. While the riot may have been perceived in religious terms from the start, other scenarios may be envisaged. Theophilus was notorious for his excessive building activities,[59] and the incident may well have started out with protests against a controversial building project, possibly by concerned people from the neighbourhood.

Even as the incident may have had little to do with religion, at least initially, it seems that the riots developed into an outright Christian–'pagan' conflict. It is not unthinkable that it was the rhetoric of Theophilus, whose own building project was at stake, that contributed to this shift in perspective highlighting the dominant social identity, Christianity, and using the *mentalité* expressed in recent imperial decrees to his advantage.[60] Consequently, the opponents were pushed into the role of the subordinate social identity, 'paganism', involving the usual stereotypes, even if the crowd members may well have been of diverse identities and background. By now the focus of the riots had moved to the Serapeum, which is when we enter the next phase of the conflict. That the Serapeum was involved does not come as a surprise, as it was a symbol of Alexandria's civic pride but also of its cults and practices ('paganism'), and the temple had already been targeted in the episcopate of George, when the Serapeum was previously plundered.[61] In other words, it was the embodiment of the social identity of the anti-Christian camp.

[57] Ibid., 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1025.22–23): *modestia religionis minus feroces.*

[58] Ibid., 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1025.23–29). As well seen by P. Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2018) 137: 'Les crimes présents démontrent donc les crimes du passé'.

[59] Palladius, *Dialogus* 6.57–64 (*SC* 341, p. 132), who accuses him of λιθομανία, as does Isidore of Pelusium, *Epistulae* 152 (*PG* 78, p. 285). See P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992) 120; Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 207; Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 275; Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, 198. The evidence for churches built under Theophilus is listed by A. Martin, 'Les premiers siècles du christianisme à Alexandrie: essai de topographie religieuse (III^{e}–IV^{e} siècles)', *REAug* 30 (1984) 211–25 at 221–25.

[60] Cf. Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 254.

[61] Julian, *Epistulae* 60 (pp. 69–70 Bidez) = Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.3.9–12 (*GCS* NF 1, p. 195), on which see Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 249, Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 68–70, who places the incident in 357/58, and H. C. Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War against Christianity* (Oxford, 2017) 38–40.

According to Rufinus, the 'pagans' use the temple as a base for attacks on the Christians and for their criminal activities. At this point, they decide to choose Olympus, 'a philosopher in name and garb only', as their ringleader.[62] Olympus was an Iamblichan philosopher who taught at the Serapeum complex, which housed a library and had become somewhat of an intellectual centre by the end of the fourth century.[63] According to Damascius, Olympus gave courses on the ancient religious traditions.[64] But even if he taught the less controversial aspects of Iamblichan Neoplatonism, he would still have been regarded as a typical representative of the category 'pagans' and, as an authoritative figure associated with the Serapeum, an ideal leader of the 'pagan' camp.[65] No doubt, Olympus had a circle of students who were also involved in the fighting. That other intellectuals participated as well appears from the account by Socrates, who mentions his teachers in Constantinople, the grammarians Helladius and Ammonius, as having taken part in the events and adds the anecdote that the former had boasted of having killed nine men in the riots.[66] Thus it is likely that the 'pagan' camp consisted of a diverse group of locals, students and teachers.[67]

In the third phase of the incident the authorities – described as 'those charged with maintaining the laws of Rome and administering justice', which undoubtedly refers to Evagrius and Romanus – become involved.[68] Rufinus says that this happens only after days of fighting ('they carried on

[62] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1025.29–1026.4), quote at p. 1026.3: *nomine et habitu solo filosofum*.

[63] On Olympus, see S. Diebler, 'Olympios/Olympos', in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, vol. 4 (Paris, 2005) 772–73; E. J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, 2006) 189–91. On the library in the Serapeum, J. S. McKenzie, S. Gibson and A. T. Reyes, 'Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archaeological Evidence', *JRS* 94 (2004) 73–121 at 99–100; Watts, *City and School*, 145, 149–50.

[64] Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, fr. 42 F–G (p. 126 Athanassiadi), who characterises him as a ἱεροδιδάσκαλος.

[65] Cf. Reicher, 'Psychology of Crowd Dynamics', 199: 'Successful leaders are those who are able to define themselves in the terms of the category definition and who define their proposals as the enactment of the relevant social identity'.

[66] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.16.9, 14 (*GCS* NF 1, p. 290.14–15, 28–29). On Helladius and Ammonius, see R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988) 241, 289.

[67] Watts, *City and School*, 191. Cf. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 92–94.

[68] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1026.4–5): *hi, quibus Romanorum legum custodia iurisque dicendi cura permissa est.* Throughout this passage, Rufinus uses the rhetorical strategy of describing the main actors and even the chief object of his story (i.e. the temple) without naming them so that the battle for the Serapeum is depicted as much as possible as a 'guerre sainte' (Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 245) between 'pagans' and Christians. The only person mentioned by name is Olympus.

in this way day after day . . .'),[69] but this is probably an exaggeration as we know that such events often evolved rapidly – in this case, one would expect the first two phases to have taken place within a day, or perhaps two days at most.[70] Moreover, the authorities would have taken action as soon as public order was at stake, which seems to be the point that the conflict had reached by now with a major building, the Serapeum, involved, but this can hardly have been after days of inaction. The authorities ask the 'pagans' to explain their actions, but instead they barricade the entrance to the Serapeum and do not comply even after being reminded of the consequences of their behaviour.[71] Though Rufinus again portrays the 'pagans' in a negative light, as they are irrational beings who can do nothing but shout in reply, the standoff is in line with the sense of empowerment that a crowd often experiences, even if this may result in harsh retribution. Evidently, with the very symbol of their social identity at stake, the 'pagans' chose not to give in.

Unable to resolve the situation, the authorities decide to write a report (*relatio*) to the emperor, to which he responds with a rescript.[72] By presenting his narrative as a continuous sequence of events, what Rufinus omits to say here is that it would have taken several weeks for a messenger to deliver the report, wait for the rescript and journey back. While riots usually develop without such significant lapses of time, there is a good parallel for the situation at Alexandria in the massacre of Thessalonica of 390, when, following the murder of the *magister equitum* Butheric amidst riots, the population of the city also had to wait between hope and fear for weeks before the imperial response came in.[73] Though the immediate tensions must have somewhat abated, one can easily imagine all parties involved anxiously awaiting the resolution of the standoff during this time, with the 'pagans' no doubt guarding access to the Serapeum.[74]

When the rescript finally arrives it is read out aloud, according to Rufinus, in the presence of both camps at the Serapeum.[75] Though the procedure as described so far is perfectly in line with how the state would respond in such a situation, Rufinus has clearly remoulded the contents

[69] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1025.29–1026.1): *verum haec per dies singulos . . . gerere.*
[70] The same observation is made by Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance*, 136.
[71] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1026.4–12).
[72] Ibid., 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1026.12–15).
[73] McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 317–18.
[74] Cf. Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance*, 136, who doubts whether the 'pagans' could have been holed up in the Serapeum for weeks while waiting for the rescript, as Rufinus seems to imply.
[75] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1026.15–27).

of the rescript to fit his narrative. The first part, in which Theodosius declares the Christians who died in the skirmishes martyrs and pardons the perpetrators, serves to highlight the emperor's clemency[76] and cannot have belonged to the original rescript. The second part, where the emperor decrees that 'the cause of the clashes' should be taken away,[77] is interpreted as an imperial order to destroy the idols and leads directly to Christian actions to that effect, starting with the most important of them all, the statue of Sarapis. Whereas the emperor is unlikely to have taken such a measure, it could well go back to a more neutrally formulated order to make an end to public disorder.[78] The case of Thessalonica again provides an instructive parallel, as Theodosius' rescript targeted only a limited number of people but was used as a licence to kill by marauding soldiers, resulting in a bloodbath.[79] It seems that something similar happened at Alexandria, where, with tensions already high, the original rescript may well have been seized upon by the Christians, emboldened vis-à-vis the authorities in a similar way as the 'pagans' who caused the standoff, to take matters into their own hands and plunder the Serapeum.[80]

It remains difficult to evaluate the following events, as Rufinus describes them in terms of an absolute Christian victory and focuses entirely on the destruction of the cult statue of Sarapis. After an *intermezzo* with a description of the Serapeum, which introduces the statue and highlights the trickeries employed at the temple,[81] we return to the moment when the rescript has just been read. The Christians are ready to destroy the statue but do not dare touch it, and it takes a soldier, 'armed with faith rather than weapons', to strike the first blow. The statue is then hacked to pieces, which are carried all over the city and burnt, 'and that was the end of the vain superstition and ancient error of Sarapis'.[82] Though it is definitely possible that during the plundering of the temple the main cult

[76] Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 253.
[77] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1026.19): *bellorum causa*.
[78] Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered', 33 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 215). Cf. M. Errington, 'Christian Accounts of the Religious Legislation of Theodosius I', *Klio* 79 (1997) 398–443 at 427–28.
[79] McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 318–23, esp. p. 321: 'Imperial instructions were susceptible to misinterpretation and distortion', drawing a direct parallel with the Serapeum incident (see next note).
[80] Ibid., 332: 'The dramatic assault on Alexandrian paganism was a local initiative, taken after another imperial command [i.e. the rescript] had been turned to ends that cannot have been intended'.
[81] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.23 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1026–28).
[82] Ibid., 11.23 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1028.9–1029.1); quotes from p. 1028.14–15: *fide quam armis magis munitus*, and pp. 1028.23–1029.1: *vanaeque superstitionis et erroris antiqui Serapis hic finis fuit*.

statue was targeted, the story of the soldier who strikes the first blow is clearly a literary embellishment and, as a whole, the destruction of the statue an object lesson of Christian triumph,[83] so that the historicity of the events must remain in doubt. Whatever may have transpired, the temple cannot have been entirely destroyed, as Rufinus later (11.27) suggests,[84] but must have remained largely intact, though it was now robbed of its primary function.[85]

In the direct aftermath of the plundering, Theophilus, who had been involved in the riots from the beginning and had cleverly turned a potentially damaging incident to his advantage, must have jumped to the occasion and claimed victory for himself and the Church. Ironically, the whole affair may have landed him an even larger and more prestigious building project. To the west of the temple complex the archaeological remains of Christian buildings have been recovered, including a church.[86] No doubt this is one of the churches that Rufinus mentions as having been constructed on either side of the temple after the 'destruction' of the Serapeum, and Theophilus is likely to have been behind it.[87] The 'pagan' camp fared less well. We know from Socrates that his teachers Helladius and Ammonius had to flee the city, while Sozomen reports Olympus' flight, and there were surely others involved in the incident who had to flee as well.[88] Though the philosophical schools continued to function at Alexandria, there may have been a crackdown on too overtly religious components in teaching, as also happened after another incident involving a temple in the 480s, and perhaps some teachers were even removed from their positions.[89] But most importantly, the temple, which had been the city's pride since its foundation under the Ptolemies, functioned no longer,

[83] Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 257, 278–79.
[84] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.27 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1033.16–17).
[85] J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt', in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden, 2011) 389–436 at 399, and 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered', 34 (repr. in Mayer and De Wet, *Reconceiving Religious Conflict*, 216).
[86] McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes, 'Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria', 107–10; J. S. McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 BC to AD 700* (New Haven, 2007) 246.
[87] Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.27 (*GCS* NF 6.2, p. 1033.16–17).
[88] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.16.9 (*GCS* NF 1, p. 290.14–15); Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.15.9 (*GCS* NF 4, p. 321.7–13).
[89] Watts, *City and School*, 200–201, and *Riot in Alexandria*, 193–94. Cf. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 99–100. The raid on the temple in the 480s is discussed in the conclusion below, p. 304. On the agreement of Ammonius, head of one of the most prominent Alexandrian philosophical schools at the time, with Bishop Peter Mongus to reduce religious components in teaching, perhaps in 487/88, see Watts, *City and School*, 220–25, and *Riot in Alexandria*, 72–77, 244–45.

bringing an end to a centuries-old cult.[90] It is only in this sense that we can speak of the destruction of the Serapeum.[91]

Conclusion

In the above analysis, we have divided into three phases the events leading to the 'destruction' of the Serapeum on the basis of Rufinus' account. The first phase starts out with a minor incident involving the renovation by Theophilus of a derelict *basilica* given to the Church. Though Rufinus describes the incident as a 'pagan'–Christian conflict from the start, it cannot be excluded that other factors were in play and that the controversy arose over another of Theophilus' building projects. While the events may have started out with small-scale demonstrations, they soon escalated to full-on riots when, perhaps fuelled by rhetoric from Theophilus' side to divert the situation, the scope of the conflict was widened to a clash between 'paganism' and Christianity. We enter the second phase when the attention of the conflict became focused on the Serapeum, which had already been the target of a bishop in the not too distant past and was the embodiment of what the, now, 'pagan' camp was fighting for. They then chose Olympus, a teacher of Iamblichan Neoplatonism in the complex, as their leader, a logical choice as he was an excellent representative of the category 'paganism'.

In the third phase, the authorities became involved. As a good example of the empowerment that a crowd often feels, the 'pagans' refused to let them into the temple, even while risking severe punishments, which resulted in a standoff. The authorities reported to the emperor who responded with a rescript. So far, the events in the first two phases and the start of phase three would have developed quickly and taken one to two days at most, in spite of what Rufinus says. He also omits to record that it would have taken a considerable time before the rescript arrived, so that the standoff must have lasted several weeks. The imperial rescript, which presumably contained a call for the ending of public disorder, was then taken by the Christian crowd – another example of the empowerment of a crowd – as a licence to plunder the Serapeum, which is exactly how Rufinus represents it while also retroactively adjusting the rescript to the

[90] For the Ptolemaic Serapeum, see McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes, 'Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria', 79–90; McKenzie, *Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt*, 41, 52–55.

[91] Cf. A. Baldini, 'Problemi della tradizione sulla "distruzione" del Serapeo di Alessandria', *RSA* 15 (1985) 97–152 at 98 (n. 3), who also doubts whether an actual destruction of the Serapeum took place and regards the term only as 'con valenza generica'.

needs of his story, just as Theodosius' rescript was misused at Thessalonica in 390. The plundering of the Serapeum did not involve a systematic dismantling of the building, as Rufinus claims and many modern historians repeat, but it did lead to the end of its cults. In the wake of the events, several participants from the 'pagan' camp had to flee, while Theophilus capitalised on the situation by proclaiming himself a champion of the Christian cause and possibly becoming involved in the building of a church or churches adjacent to the Serapeum complex.

Once his ideological agenda is filtered out, Rufinus thus describes a credible order of events, which is also perfectly in line with what we know about how riots unfold. Such types of escalating events are often seen to depend on intergroup dynamics that result in changes of categorisation and context. In the case of the Serapeum, the members of the crowd seem originally to have come together to protest against the – in their eyes – excessive building project at the former *basilica*. Presumably incited by Theophilus, the Christian camp then imposed the category of 'pagans' on them, making them an oppositional (out)group and providing a new context in which they operated. This led to a recategorisation of the crowd as the 'pagan' camp, probably extending the ingroup to a diverse group of people, who together took action against the outgroup. This created a new context to which the Christians in turn reacted, and so on.[92] Thus we can see how riots usually start with a relatively minor incident and develop through several phases, in which factors such as the intensity of the conflict, what is at stake, the actors, the location and the target can change. I will illustrate this with two parallels, both 'religious riots', one from a completely different time and place, the other from the same city but about a century later.

The first of these is the Holy Week riot of Girona in 1331, as so eloquently described by David Nirenberg in his classic study of religious violence in the fourteenth-century Crown of Aragon. On the Thursday before Easter, clergymen started throwing rocks at the perimeter wall of the Jewish quarter, or *cal*, allegedly because Jews had ventured outside the walls, which was forbidden during this week. In this phase, things remained fairly stable, with the local bailiff and his men controlling the actions of the stone throwers, disbanding groups and confiscating weapons. Things got out of hand, however, in the second phase, when

[92] Reicher, 'Psychology of Crowd Dynamics', 200–202, esp. p. 202: 'Not only does categorization for the one group shape the actions which become the context for the other, but in the process the very categories and the relations between them are altered'.

the officials violently clashed with clergymen in front of the cathedral and the bailiff was threatened, even though excessive violence was avoided. In the third phase, the bailiff returned to the cathedral with the subvicar, and when renewed fighting broke out, called in the help of the vicar and leading citizens. The clergymen retreated into the cathedral and after a standoff further confrontation was averted.[93]

The second parallel is the Paralius section in the *Life of Severus* of Zachariah of Mytilene, written after 512, which has been extensively analysed by Edward Watts in his *Riot in Alexandria* (2011). On a Friday, perhaps in spring 486, after publicly criticising his professor Horapollon, Paralius was beaten up by fellow students. In the next phase, Paralius fled to the *philoponoi*, zealous Christian students with ties to the Enaton monastery near Alexandria, who turned the beating into a 'persecution' of a 'Christian' student by the 'pagan' intellectual establishment. Leadership at the Enaton and Bishop Peter Mongus (477–89) put their support behind the *philoponoi* and when an indignant Christian crowd gathered several professors of philosophy had to flee the city. In the third phase, the scope of the incident was widened again when Peter reconceived the affair as an outright 'pagan'–Christian conflict, which led to a raid by a group of monks on a shrine of Isis at Menouthis, a suburb of Alexandria, on Saturday and a parade and burning of the 'idols' discovered during the raid in the city on Sunday.[94]

Both cases have elements in common with the Serapeum incident and can be compared in terms of intergroup dynamics, though in each case different circumstances were at play resulting in a unique course of events. To turn to the closest parallel, the Paralius affair, in both instances an Alexandrian bishop, by recategorising an existing conflict as a clash between 'paganism' and Christianity, instigated an action against a temple, and intellectuals – teachers and students from the Alexandrian philosophical schools – were placed in the 'pagan' camp.[95] On the other hand, there are also clear differences, such as that the Paralius affair did not really involve any clashes between large crowds and that it hardly had any effect on the legacy of Peter, whereas the Serapeum incident cemented that of Theophilus.[96]

[93] D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996), esp. pp. 206–13.

[94] Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, esp. pp. 10–15, with the review by J. H. F. Dijkstra in *AntTard* 21 (2013) 443–45.

[95] Cf. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, 14, who also draws an explicit parallel between both incidents.

[96] In fact, as Watts, *Riot in Alexandria*, 12–16, 229–50, sets out well, Peter, whose anti-Chalcedonian credentials were at stake, tried to use Theophilus' reputation as anti-'pagan' champion in the Paralius affair to boost his spiritual authority, but the carefully staged raid on the shrine at Menouthis failed to have the desired effect.

To conclude, in this study of the riots leading to the 'destruction' of the Serapeum at Alexandria in 391/92 we have demonstrated the benefits of a close reading of the texts, combined with insights from social psychology, for reconstructing the most plausible course of events and illuminating the perspective of crowds and how they respond to other crowds, although inevitably many gaps in our sources remain. It is to be hoped that this study will be an incentive to further such studies of violent crowd behaviour in Late Antique cities, revealing the complexity and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. All in all, the 'religious riots' of 391/92 were nothing unusual in the urban context of Late Antique Alexandria. What makes them so special was the impact of the events, which, through escalating tensions, resulted in the plundering of the Serapeum and the end of its cults. The incident may not have been a fatal blow to 'paganism', as Rufinus describes it, but it definitely constituted a major turning point in the religious history of Late Antique Egypt, and the Late Antique world as a whole.

CHAPTER 13

*Violence and Monks: From a Mystical Concept to an Intolerant Practice (Fourth to Fifth Century)**

Fabrizio Vecoli

Ancient Monasticism and Factual Violence

In its early days, monasticism went hand in hand with several manifestations of violence. While it is true that the semantic scope of the word 'violence' and the concept that it evokes need to be defined,[1] there is still a premise that we cannot afford to disregard: the literary sources contain a significant number of passages in which violence occurs in the literal sense, which will be taken here as 'the use of physical force against an opponent'. In the accounts preserved about the first monks, this violence appears to have been used against adherents of other cults (in the context of an opposition between Christianity and paganism),[2] or against people from Christian movements different from the one to which the protagonist belongs and vice versa (in cases where there was an intra-Christian conflict between Nicaeans and Arians, or between Chalcedonians and miaphysites);[3] it may also be exerted on objects of worship or sacred buildings of non-Christians,[4] which, as has recently been argued, may

* Translation by M. Houle.

[1] See the General Introduction, pp. 3–4.

[2] Concerning Egypt some cases can be adduced, such as the murder of the Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia in 415 (Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.13–15 [*GCS* NF 1, pp. 357–61]), and the violence used by the monk Shenoute of Atripe (*c.* 360–465) against a rich pagan (*Life of Shenoute* 81–82 [*CSCO* 41, p. 40]).

[3] E.g. Shenoute hitting Nestorius and accusing him of impiety (*Life of Shenoute* 129 [*CSCO* 41, pp. 58–59]). For the seventh century, see the persecutions of miaphysites by Chalcedonians mentioned in the *Life of Samuel of Kalamun* 7 (pp. 6–7 Alcock).

[4] The destruction of the Serapeum in 391/92 is an emblematic case covered by historiographical sources: Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum* 6.107–13 (pp. 39–41 Goulet); Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 11.22–23 (*GCS* NF 6.2, pp. 1025–30); Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.16–17 (*GCS* NF 1, pp. 289–91); Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.15.2–10 (*GCS* NF 4, pp. 319–21); Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.22 (*GCS* NF 5, pp. 320–21), on which see Chapter 12 by Dijkstra, this volume. See also the profanation of a temple idol by the monk-bishop Macedonius in the *Life of Aaron* 31 (p. 80 Dijkstra and Van der Vliet) and of the idols of Gessios, a rich pagan from Panopolis, in the *Life of Shenoute* 125–27 (*CSCO* 41, p. 57). For a recent review of the issue, see T. M. Kristensen, 'Religious Conflict in Late Antique Alexandria: Christian Responses to "Pagan" Statues

have acted as a safety valve against a more serious aggravation of hostilities.[5] Finally, within the more restricted framework of monastic life, violence could be employed against those who disobeyed the precepts of the master or challenged his authority and, by doing so, adopted an attitude of religious dissent.[6]

Admittedly, these episodes of physical violence are mentioned almost exclusively in literary sources, which – after previous scholars had massively relied on them[7] – now raise questions as to their factual reality[8] or, beyond any anachronistic interpretation, as to their actual meaning.[9] Their absence, for instance, from ascetic treatises (even if only in the form of recommendations regarding religious otherness) may seem suspicious and leads one to consider them as a rhetorical artifice. Here we are drawn into

in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries AD', in J. Krasilnikoff and G. Hinge (eds.), *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot* (Aarhus, 2010) 158–75.

[5] A. G. López, *Shenoute of Atripe and the Uses of Poverty: Rural Patronage, Religious Conflict, and Monasticism in Late Antique Egypt* (Berkeley, 2013) 107: 'Many old temples seem to have functioned as safety valves in the religious struggles of the fifth century. They focused religious conflict but at the same time contained it and limited its wider implications'.

[6] For Egypt, see *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Alphabetical Collection, Zacharias 4 (*PG* 65, p. 180); *Life of Shenoute* 113 (*CSCO* 41, p. 53). Furthermore, in the *Life* 6 (*CSCO* 41, p. 10), Shenoute, as a child, struck a possessed man with an axe to exorcise him (and he was indeed miraculously healed). In fact, the abbot was known – rightly or wrongly – for his liberal use of the baton, sometimes until the death of the beaten sinner; see his comments in *Canons* 6 about a monk who had died from corporal punishment (vol. 1, p. 43 Amélineau): 'As if Shenoute had killed people, when in fact it was that their limit of life was fulfilled, or that it was the day when God was pleased to bring death upon them'; trans. R. Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery* (Oxford, 2002) 44, where the incident is also discussed.

[7] E.g. G. Fowden, 'Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire, AD 320–435', *JThS* 29 (1978) 53–78; W. H. C. Frend, 'Monks and the End of Greco-Roman Paganism in Syria and Egypt', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 11 (1990) 469–84; D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 1998). See in particular the description of the Christianisation at Gaza based on the *Life of Severus* in F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1994) 205–40.

[8] See the General Introduction, pp. 5–6, and Mayer, pp. 261–64, both this volume. E.g. concerning the aforementioned episode of Macedonius in the *Life of Aaron* (n. 4 above), J. H. F. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298–642 CE)* (Leuven, 2008) 265, 267, and J. H. F. Dijkstra and J. van der Vliet, *The Coptic Life of Aaron: Critical Edition, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 2020) 188–90, demonstrate its literary character. On the literary value of temple destructions in Egyptian Christian literature, see J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt', in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden, 2011) 389–436. On the difficulty of reconciling the literary and documentary sources, A. Martin, 'Sarapis et les chrétiens d'Alexandrie: un réexamen', in C. Décobert and J.-Y. Empereur (eds.), *Alexandrie médiévale*, vol. 3 (Cairo, 2008) 41–57.

[9] An interesting introduction to the problem is by H. A. Drake, 'Intolerance, Religious Violence, and Political Legitimacy in Late Antiquity', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79 (2011) 193–235. See also the social reading stressing the intergenerational tensions associated with Christianisation by D. Frankfurter, '"Things Unbefitting Christians": Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis', *JECS* 8 (2000) 273–95.

the issue of evaluating the reliability of the literary sources, deconstruction of which is likely to reduce their historical significance and gives rise to the presentation of Christianisation as a more peaceful process than was previously thought (a conclusion about which – despite its certain merits – I still have some reservations).[10] The destruction of a temple and its conversion into a church, to mention just one example, is undoubtedly a literary *topos*. However, this need not imply that it was always invented;[11] a *topos* can be rooted in facts and its recurrence can point to something more than mere literary creation.[12] Indeed, the actors of history often act according to ambient models transmitted by the various forms of their culture.

Theoretical Issues

This last point leads us to consider the question of the exemplary nature of a model proposed by the texts. Whether the stories of violence reflected real events or not,[13] their presence in monastic hagiography indicates that they were regarded as models that could potentially be appreciated and imitated.[14] From the point of view of monastic theory, this dimension of violence as a rhetoric of confrontation with otherness raises the same

[10] For this reductionist tendency in scholarship, see Mayer, this volume, p. 263. E.g. on the region of Aswan in Upper Egypt, J. H. F. Dijkstra, 'Religious Violence in Late Antique Egypt Reconsidered: The Cases of Alexandria, Panopolis and Philae', *Journal of Early Christian History* 6 (2015) 24–48 at 30 (repr. in W. Mayer and C. L. de Wet [eds.], *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* [London, 2018] 211–33 at 213), writes: 'religious transformation in the whole region, including Philae, consisted of a gradual and complex process that was essentially peaceful'; it should be added that this author does not deny that occasionally religious violence did take place.

[11] Though this could certainly be the case. In the sources I discovered many hagiographical elements which were probably just literary; see F. Vecoli, 'Samuel de Qalamoun et la fin de la "parrhesia" dans l'hagiographie égyptienne', *Proche Orient Chrétien* 57 (2007) 7–23.

[12] The historical reality behind the literary motif of the desert, which is recurrent in hagiographical texts, is problematic. In this regard, see J. E. Goehring, 'The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt' and 'Withdrawing from the Desert: Pachomius and the Development of Village Monasticism in Upper Egypt', repr. in his *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, 1999) 73–88 and 89–109.

[13] Despite the fact that these sources are pieces of literature, I still lend some credibility to the descriptions of violence (even though it is hard to assess their real impact) in F. Vecoli, 'Verso il conflitto tra pagani e cristiani nell'alto Egitto tra IV e V secolo', *AnnSE* 20 (2003) 369–82, and 'La missione monastica tra i pagani: aspetti del rapporto pagani–cristiani nell'Egitto tardo antico', in N. Spineto (ed.), *La religione come fattore di integrazione: modelli di convivenza e di scambio religioso nel mondo antico* (Alessandria, 2008) 189–201.

[14] Because the questions are close, I adopt here a similar perspective as I did with the question about monks and their relation to otherness in F. Vecoli, 'The Other in the Spirituality of the Desert Fathers', in K. Berthelot and M. Morgenstern (eds.), *The Quest for a Common Humanity: Human Dignity and Otherness in the Religious Traditions of the Mediterranean* (Leiden, 2011) 159–78.

problems as if it had been real. The issue here is the acceptability of violence for the monk. How can a monk, cut off from the world (and from its logic) and in search of spiritual peace, conceive the use of violence towards the other?[15]

To answer this question we must first raise some considerations. At the outset, there seems to be a contradiction in the sources between the athletic or belligerent profile of the monk,[16] and his ideal of rest (ἀνάπαυσις) found in humility (ταπείνωσις) and tranquility (ἡσυχία).[17] These two conceptual spheres of monastic life, war and rest, are also the subject of an in-depth examination amongst the ancient theorists of asceticism.

We could tackle this problem by asserting the essentially contradictory nature of the religious phenomenon – as Pierre Bourdieu did through a sociological lens[18] – or of ideas in general – as with the scholars from the Cambridge School.[19] However, one must wonder whether, on the one hand, what is conceived by Bourdieu as an always operative dominating physiology in the organisation of the religious structure or, on the other hand, what is described as the result of a contextual 'idiographism' in the

[15] On this matter, Frend, 'Monks and the End of Greco-Roman Paganism', 469, remarks: 'Pagans, Nestorians, Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians all suffered from upsurges of mass fury among men otherwise dedicated to prayer and fasting, to labour and relief of the poor and oppressed. The paradox is extraordinary and its solution requires the skills of psychologists and sociologists as well as those of an historian'; cf. pp. 479–80: 'Even today it is difficult to reconcile the feats of abstinence and observed record of humility and compassion with the equally well-attested murderous zeal they displayed against those whom they regarded as their enemies'.

[16] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection III, 4.3.2 (*SC* 275, p. 100; trans. on facing page): 'Car beaucoup d'esprits oppressent l'âme et attirent à eux tout ce qui rampe sur terre; ils occupent l'âme et la font vagabonder. C'est pourquoi le chrétien doit être semblable à un athlète et à un combattant'.

[17] On the terms 'rest' and 'tranquility', see P. Miquel, *Lexique du désert: étude de quelques mots-clés du vocabulaire monastique grec ancien* (Bégrolles-en-Mauges, 1986) 73–86, 143–80.

[18] Understood as a simulacrum created by theologians to delineate a symbolic field on which they would then have the monopoly of management: P. Bourdieu, 'Genèse et structure du champ religieux', *Revue française de sociologie* 12 (1971) 295–334, esp. pp. 315–16.

[19] For whom the incoherence of ideas is explained by their dependence on the contexts in which they are developed. A seminal text for this approach is Q. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *H&T* 8 (1969) 3–53. On this point, a critical update is given by M. Bevir, 'Mind and Method in the History of Ideas', *H&T* 36 (1997) 167–89 at 168: 'An understanding of debates about the history of ideas in terms of the philosophy of mind provides an interesting perspective from which to view the continuing dispute about the appropriateness therein of a principle of coherence. Traditionally historians of ideas have devoted at least some of their energies to finding a coherent pattern in the ideas of the authors they study. They have struggled to reconcile apparently contradictory ideas found in a single text, or two or more texts by a single author; and sometimes they even have tried to introduce order into the scattered, disjointed remarks of an author by relating them to an overarching theory he or she never expressed. Recently, however, linguistic contextualists, led by J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner, have denigrated what they see as "the myth of coherence". They argue a concern with coherence is methodologically illegitimate because it leads historians more or less inexorably to depart from anything that actually existed in the past'.

production of salient ideas in a socio-cultural milieu, can hold *sic et simpliciter* when it comes to a specific and well-thought-out phenomenon such as the elaboration of the ascetic theory in early monasticism. Our point is that the oxymorons peace/conflict or rest/violence cannot be resolved with the imperious affirmation that every religion has contradictions or that every cluster of ideas simply reflects inherently pluralistic (and hence dissonant) contexts. Given the rigour of ascetic reflection found in the texts, we must try to discern how the monks could have produced or, at the very least, handled the paradox and transformed it into a doctrine which was first ascetic, then mystical.[20] In fact, they inherited this paradox from the Bible, which itself is anything but coherent: suffice it to mention how Pseudo-Macarius, a monastic author who is considered as one of the first mystics of the Christian tradition,[21] was able to use – within the context of an uninhibited exegetical practice – both the beatitude of the meek, who will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5), and the *logion* according to which the Kingdom of Heaven will belong to the violent ones (Matthew 11:12).[22]

Beyond this observation, what is of particular interest to us is the articulation of an ascetic way of thinking based upon the biblical facts, which, with the aim to establish a doctrine, is concerned with coherence and actively seeks it. This intellectual exercise represents an effort to alleviate the tension caused by incoherence in the text, which can only be solved through allegory. The incoherence of the data presented in the text is no doubt due to the multiple contexts in which the text was produced.[23] Exegetical allegory, however, entails the intellectual effort to ensure coherence, even if the incoherence is consciously accepted. As Origen said, the *defectus litterae* permits the search for meaning at a

[20] According to the insight of B. Russell, 'Mysticism and Logic', repr. in his *Mysticism and Logic* (London, 1917) 1–32 at 7–8, Western mysticism developed as a result of the effort to deal with the foremost paradox of all, the one posited by Parmenides: the paradox of being and non-being.

[21] A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, 1981) 113–25.

[22] One among many examples: in Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 27.23 (p. 230 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger), gentleness and humility (with the quotation from Matthew 5:5) show the path to the Kingdom of Heaven, whereas in *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.2 (p. 183 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger), Matthew 11:12 is used to show that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the violent ones (for the latter passage, see also n. 63 below).

[23] Unless we consider this logical incoherence as the projection of the inner structures of the human mind. In this case, in order to understand ascetic doctrine, the starting point would be a paradigmatic rather than a syntagmatic reading of it, following the approach of C. Lévi-Strauss, 'La structure des mythes', repr. in C. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris, 1958) 227–66 in his analysis of the contradictions in mythology.

higher level:[24] in some ways, with the development of monastic theology, we see an attempt (similar to that of the allegorical exegesis of biblical texts) at organising and systematising (evidently in ways that differ from one author to another) the contradictory techniques of purification adopted by the Desert Fathers. This ties in with the idea – already formulated by Jonathan Z. Smith following Paul Ricoeur – of a process of reflection triggered by the perception of incoherence.[25]

With regard to the brutalities of the ancient monks – even if fewer than previously imagined – we have to understand the mindscape in which the very idea of violence took shape and was henceforth configured as an acceptable notion. The assumption behind this approach is, to some extent, similar to that of the history of ideas, in which ideas are regarded as the driving force behind human facts and not just a mere rethinking of these facts (the one does not exclude the other, anyway). In addition to Hegelian idealism, embodied in the historicist approach of Benedetto Croce, this perspective is also found in the writings of authors such as Karl Mannheim and Max Weber:[26] it is not about taking position in the diatribe between materialism and idealism, but rather to underline the importance of the 'thinkability' of certain notions for them to become historically operational. It means to scrutinise ideas, their assembling into systems of thought and the mentality generated by those ideas as determining factors in the development of events.[27] More specifically, then, we are concerned here with the 'thinkability' of violence in monastic theory. In its elaboration and influence, monastic theory transcended the boundaries of local contexts, which allows us – at this level of thinking – to broaden our perspective to a larger body of sources.

[24] On this subject, I refer to what is now a classic study written by the recently deceased Manlio Simonetti, *Lettera e/o allegoria: un contributo alla storia dell'esegesi patristica* (Rome, 1985) 83.

[25] See J. Z. Smith, 'Map Is Not Territory', in his *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden, 1978) 289–309, who refers to Ricoeur at pp. 293–94: 'For I do believe that religion is, among other things, an intellectual activity – and, to play upon Paul Ricoeur's well-known phrase, it is the perception of incongruity that gives rise to thought'.

[26] Particularly in the preface by L. Wirth to the English edition of *Ideologie und Utopie* (Bonn, 1929): K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London, 1936) xiii–xxxi. Moreover, Mannheim is the starting point for the reflections by J. Séguy, 'Les sociétés imaginées: monachisme et utopie', *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations* 26 (1971) 328–54 on monasticism.

[27] This is an approach particularly noticeable in some recent studies, e.g. R. Wisniewski, 'Pagan Temples, Christians and Demons in the Late Antique East and West', *SEJG* 54 (2016) 111–28, who argues that violence against sacred buildings, more common in the East than the West, could be due to the Eastern belief that in temples there was a real possibility of an encounter with gods, which were now considered to be demons by the Christians.

Ancient Monasticism and Ascetic Violence

Looking at the occurrences of the term violence (βία) in the systematic collection of the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, which is a representative text of early monastic spirituality, we find that violence is directed against two targets: the monk himself and demons,[28] without it always being possible to draw a sharp distinction between the two. Indeed, demons inhabit the inner world of the hermit and this makes the war against temptations that they induce into a conflict with the self.[29] The introversive nature of the confrontation does not necessarily imply that asceticism is extremist, pathological or 'abnormal': although the association has been made,[30] it is today called into question.[31]

The monk possesses βία, a word which means both strength and violence (in an interesting lack of lexical distinction). One saying highlights a fundamental aspect of the monastic identity (as perceived by its actors), which is linked to the exercise of strength:[32] 'strength can do anything', even – it is said – maintaining concentration in prayer during a meal and in a conversation with a master. This 'strength' merges with the willingness to inflict violence on oneself (and with the patience to endure the violence suffered by others).[33] It prevents, as is said in another saying, the Devil from harming the holy monk Macarius, because a 'great strength' emerges from him, his humility (clearly, a Pauline effect is sought here with the paradox between strength and weakness).[34] Demons, and the evil thoughts (λογισμοὺς ῥυπαρούς) that they whisper into the ears of

[28] In the first case, e.g. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 14.22.11 (*SC* 474, p. 268); in the second case, e.g. ibid., 15.15.17 (*SC* 474, p. 298, an exorcism).

[29] The *Life of Aaron* 9 (p. 68 Dijkstra and Van der Vliet) speaks of a 'bitter fight' against the thoughts brought by demons. It is a fight of which the secrets are transmitted from master to disciple and which is compared to that of Moses against Amalek in *Life of Aaron* 19–21 (p. 74 Dijkstra and Van der Vliet) and of Paul (in Ephesians 6:12) against rulers and powers in *Life of Aaron* 23 (p. 76 Dijkstra and Van der Vliet).

[30] R. Krawiec, 'Asceticism', in S. Ashbrook and D. C. Hunter (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford, 2008) 764–85 at 764–65. For a socio-psychopathological interpretation of asceticism, see R. M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985).

[31] It is worth noting that L. Wilson, 'Starvation and Self-Mutilation in Religious Traditions', in M. Jerryson, M. Juergensmeyer and M. Kitts (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence* (Oxford, 2013) 242–49, the only chapter in the volume which specifically deals with the issue of violence against the self, is concerned with extreme practices ('forms of extreme self-denial').

[32] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 12.24.1–2 (*SC* 474, p. 224): 'If you want to be a monk, be grimly determined (κράτει βίαν), for he who does not have grim determination (μὴ ἔχων τὴν βίαν) is not a monk'; all translations of this work are from J. Wortley, *The Book of the Elders. Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection* (Kalamazoo, 2012).

[33] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 17.13.6 (*SC* 498, p. 18).

[34] Ibid., 15.40.5 (*SC* 474, p. 314).

the hermits,[35] have their roots in a human attachment to worldly things, namely to the interests, pleasures and affections that characterise human nature. Violence against oneself demonstrates the monk's striving for detachment and renunciation:[36] temptations do not take hold of him because he denies to himself what the demon could use to stir up his desires.[37] He even renounces the right to have a will of his own.[38]

Violence and peace (here peace can be variously defined as ἀνάπαυσις 'rest' or γλυκύτης 'sweetness') is a pair of opposites often to be found in the monastic doctrine. It can be argued that the need for self-discipline, perceived as a warlike effort, justifies an allegorised use of the concept of violence in order to illustrate the effort to control the inner drives.[39] However, it should be emphasised that these antonyms (violence and peace) involve more than a simple symbolic succession of effort and reward.[40] Since violence highlights the paradox of spiritual life, it is also a metaphor in the sense of Ricoeur, namely a cognitive operation decoupling truth and logical consistency.[41] In an illogical manner, the hermit desires both the rest that follows the ascetic fight and that the fight never ceases.[42]

[35] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 5.4, 23.1 (*SC* 400, pp. 144, 198).

[36] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 21.19 (*SC* 498, p. 204): 'To be hard on oneself (βιάζεσθαι) in every respect – that is the way of God'; 21.51 (*SC* 498, p. 212): 'Go and love to do yourself violence (βιάζεσθαι)'.

[37] Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Alphabetical Collection, Antonius 20 (*PG* 65, col. 81): those who decide to fight but want to keep something for themselves 'are torn in this way by the demons who make war on them'; trans. B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (London, 1975) 4.

[38] Pseudo-Basil, *Sermo de renuntiatione saeculi* 9 (*PG* 31, cols. 645, 648): 'Le Royaume des cieux est aux violents et "ce sont les violents qui s'en emparent" [Matthew 11:12]: c'est la parole évangélique. Elle appelle la violence la fatigue du corps que les disciples du Christ supportent délibérément en rejetant les volontés propres et le repos du corps, et en gardant tous les commandements du Christ. Si donc tu veux t'emparer du Royaume de Dieu, sois violent. Soumets ta nuque au joug du Christ. Serre les courroies autour de ton cou; qu'il oppresse ta nuque. Rends-le léger par le labeur des vertus . . .'; trans. J.-M. Baguenard, *Dans la tradition basilienne: les Constitutions ascétiques, l'Admonition à un fils spirituel, et autres écrits* (Bégrolles-en-Mauges, 1994) 270. There are three wills: one is from God, one is from man and one from demons. Of those three, only one must be followed because 'God only accepts that which is His own'. See Ammonas, *Epistulae* 5.4 (*PO* 11, p. 448); trans. D. J. Chitty and S. Brock, *The Letters of Ammonas, Successor of Antony* (Oxford, 1979) 15.

[39] An example which is radical but, for this very reason, quite clear: Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 2 (p. 17 Butler): Dorotheus the monk said, 'It [my body] kills me; I will kill it'; trans. R. T. Meyer, *Palladius: The Lausiac History* (London, 1965) 33.

[40] Nevertheless this succession does exist in the texts.

[41] P. Ricœur, *La métaphore vive* (Paris, 1975).

[42] E.g. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 7.12 (*SC* 387, p. 342): 'Going to an elder, he [John Colobos] announced to him, "I see myself reposing, with no battle to fight". The elder said to him, "Go and beseech God for the battle to come upon you, for it is by [fighting] battles that the soul makes progress"'.

The only real rest is in fighting, without it being a fight.[43] The contradictory character of this position should not come as a surprise,[44] since paradox constitutes the very essence of the monk.[45] He pushes the (already paradoxical) condition of the Christian – an inhabitant of Heaven who lives on earth[46] – to the extreme of a human nature that is assimilated to that of the angels,[47] or even deified.[48]

There is a mystical tension in this affirmation of the simultaneous presence of opposite concepts, especially when the opposition remains unresolved.[49] In the eternal liturgical present towards which the monk tends and in which everything comes together,[50] the concepts of violence

[43] Ibid., 21.49 (*SC* 498, p. 210): 'As long as you take repose (μετὰ ἀναπαύσεως), you cannot give repose (ἀναπαῦσαι) to God'.

[44] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection III, 3.3.2 (*SC* 275, p. 90; trans. on facing page): when the soul of the ascetic is ready 'le Seigneur se montre à elle sous un double aspect, avec ses plaies et dans la gloire de sa lumière . . . Elle progresse ainsi suivant l'un et l'autre aspect, celui de la souffrance et celui de glorieuse lumière'.

[45] On this matter, see also the metaphor of the fruit (καρπός) used in the *Letters* of Ammonas; S. Rubenson, '"As Already Translated to the Kingdom While Still in the Body": The Transformation of the Ascetic in Early Egyptian Monasticism', in T. Karlsen Seim and J. Økland (eds.), *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, vol. I (Berlin, 2009) 271–89 at 286: '*karpos* metaphorically refers primarily either to the results of or the rewards for ascetic labour, but it can also refer to the labour itself, as the visible signs of inner dispositions'.

[46] As the author of the *Epistula ad Diognetum* (5.4; text and trans. B. D. Ehrman, Loeb) says about the Christians: 'They inhabit both Greek and barbarian cities, according to the lot assigned to each. And they show forth the character of their own citizenship in a marvelous and admittedly paradoxical way by following local customs . . .'.

[47] Evagrius Ponticus, *De oratione* 113 (*PG* 79, p. 1191).

[48] For the pre-Dionysiac monastic (non-Cappadocian) texts, see Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 26.2 (p. 206 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger); Diadochus of Photice, *Homilia de ascensione Domini* 6 (*SC* 5bis, p. 168). Useful considerations in N. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford, 2004) 241–48.

[49] Take, for instance, the complex relationship between tears and laughter in John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* 7 (*PG* 88, cols. 808–809): 'In your heart be like an emperor, seated high in humility, commanding laughter: "Go!" and it goes; and sweet weeping: "Come!" and it comes . . . God does not demand or desire that someone should mourn out of sorrow of heart, but rather that out of love for Him he should rejoice with the laughter of the soul'; trans. C. Luibheid and N. Russell, *John Climacus: The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (New York, 1982) 140–41. From this relation stems the paradox of a 'cheerful renunciation' (7 [*PG* 88, col. 804]), which enjoyed great success in later orthodox theology.

[50] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 7.11–12 (*SC* 400, p. 154): 'So he himself did not dwell on time that had passed, but each day, as though beginning his ascetic discipline anew, made progress by working harder, reflecting continually on what Paul said: "We are forgetting what lies behind and straining forward (ἐπεκτεινόμενος) to what lies ahead" (Philippians 3:13). He would also recall the voice of the prophet Elijah who said, "The Lord lives, the One before whom I stand today" (1 Kings 17:1, 18:15). He observed that in saying "today", he was not counting time that had passed but was always making a new beginning for himself, endeavoring each day to stand with God as though he were about to appear before God, pure in heart and prepared to obey only the will of God, and the will of no other'; trans. T. Vivian and A. Athanassakis, *Athanasius of Alexandria, The Life of Anthony, The Coptic Life and the Greek Life* (Kalamazoo, 2003) 77.

and peace aim for the same condition, but from different angles: the condition of an 'I', which, though connected to the body, aspires to rise up to the source of the creation (the theme of the ἄνοδος). There is certainly a dualistic tendency in monotheism but that does not weaken its monotheistic orientation. If the former inspires in the anchorite a disgust for matter and body, the latter prevents him from escaping materiality by simply fleeing it:[51] he must accept what is after all God's creation and yet he must reject it every day.

This aspect of the fight against temptations and its intrinsic violent character is strikingly illustrated by the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* of John Climacus.[52] This later author insists particularly on the concept of violence, relying on the evangelical text of Matthew 11:12, where Jesus affirms that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the violent. For John Climacus, in the undertaking of the spiritual ascension through asceticism, there is a violence inflicted on oneself,[53] then on (human) nature,[54] and finally on God.[55] On this latter point, Clement of Alexandria already states that God loves the strong ones and those who fight to obtain salvation, while he resists them in order to see them fight.[56] In a way, Irenaeus of Lyon has the same interpretation when he says that violence is a sign of the free will inherent in every man (who must persist in his decision to choose good over evil).[57] In this, Christians are different from Gnostics who believe in the diversified nature of humanity (divided into somatic, psychic and Gnostic).[58] John Climachus is of interest to us as he brings together the different positions previously expressed concerning the violence of asceticism.[59] For him, as for all his predecessors, the concept of violence

[51] A solution that was accessible to the Gnostics was to affirm a divine principle completely alien to the material world and therefore to political power (which manages this world through violence). Dualism offers an ontological justification for a total withdrawal and, according to G. Filoramo, *Che cos'è la religione: temi, metodi, problemi* (Turin, 2004) 293, this explains why Gnosticism was a pacific religious movement.

[52] John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* 1 (*PG* 88, col. 633): 'The monk is ever embattled with what he is, and he is the unfailing warder of his senses . . . Withdrawal from the world is a willing hatred of all that is materially prized, a denial of nature for the sake of what is above nature'; trans. Luibheid and Russell, *John Climacus*, 74.

[53] John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* 1, 4, 13 (*PG* 88, cols. 636, 704–705, 860).

[54] Ibid., 1, 14, 26 (*PG* 88, cols. 633, 869, 1020).

[55] Ibid., 4, 7 (*PG* 88, cols. 704, 809).

[56] Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 21.3 (*GCS* 17bis, p. 173). This is a theme also found in Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection III, 3.1.5 (*SC* 275, pp. 86–88).

[57] Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus haereses* 4.37.7 (*SC* 100, pp. 938–42).

[58] E.g. in the work without title Nag Hammadi Codex II,5 § 98 (p. 70 Layton).

[59] In many ways John Climachus summarises the ascetic theory of the Christian East. For instance, concerning the question of monasticism as an angelic state, see J. L. Zecher, 'The Angelic Life in Desert and *Ladder*: John Climacus's Re-formulation of Ascetic Spirituality', *JECS* 21 (2013) 111–36.

is anchored in the mysterious verse of Matthew 11:12. Christian writers did not really insist on it until the emergence of the monastic phenomenon: it is at this moment that it is recovered as a biblical antecedent of a strong, even radical, asceticism.

Monastic Exegesis of Matthew 11:12

What stands out among the numerous monastic authors before John Climacus who quote this passage from the Gospel is that the violence is above all directed towards the self.[60] Many, including John Cassian, feel the need to clarify that the violent ones, who are exalted, are only those 'who exercise a noble violence not upon others but upon their own soul',[61] and he reinforces his point with a quote from Proverbs.[62] To reach their goal, some authors go so far as to distort the quoted biblical text in order to better adapt it to their interpretation.[63] Evagrius Ponticus does not specifically address the question of violence, but speaks more generally about the irascible part of the soul (θυμός), explaining that, by its very nature, it fights demons, not men, which would be unnatural.[64] A similar interpretation is found in Isaiah of Scetis, who – in an effort at theorisation typical of this author – tries to find coherence between violence (triggered by anger [ὀργή]) and peace by differentiating the objects against which these opposing and yet completely natural (in the sense of corresponding to God's plan) attitudes are directed.[65] It can be observed that, in a

[60] Antony, *Epistulae* 6.19–21 (*CSCO* 148, p. 39); Arabic *Life of Pachomius* (pp. 348–49 Amélineau); Abba Isaiah, *Ascetikon* 30.6 (p. 291 De Broc; violence as ambition); *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 1.16, 7.52 (*SC* 387, pp. 110–12, 382–86); *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Anonymous Collection, N 614 (p. 261 Regnault: violence as zeal in carrying out work); Callinicus, *Vita Hypatii* 30.12 (*SC* 177, p. 204: violence as patience in working on oneself); John Cassian, *Collationes* 24.26.12–13 (*CSEL* 13, pp. 708–709).

[61] John Cassian, *Collationes* 24.26.12 (*CSEL* 13, p. 709); trans. B. Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences* (New York, 1997) 850.

[62] Proverbs 16:26 (LXX): 'A man at labor labors for himself (ἐβιάζεται) and fences off his own destruction'; trans. NETS.

[63] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.2 (p. 183 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger): βιάζεσθε, βιασταὶ γὰρ ἁρπάζουσι τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν 'Be violent, for the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force'; all translations of this work are from A. J. Mason, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian* (London, 1921).

[64] Evagrius Ponticus, *Praktikos* 24 (*SC* 171, p. 556).

[65] Abba Isaiah, *Ascetikon* 17.2 (p. 147 De Broc): 'for love and long-suffering bring natural wrath, and if these virtues remain in you, instead of directing your anger against your neighbor, you will direct it against the demons and be at peace with your neighbor, being filled with compunction and humility'; trans. J. Chryssavgis and P. Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses* (Kalamazoo, 2002) 133. The harmonisation made by Isaiah agrees with that of later ascetic literature. See J.-C. Larchet, *Thérapeutique des maladies spirituelles* (Paris, 2000) 86–93.

monotheistic spirit which attributes all things to God and wishes to counter any form of dualism, the author avoids categorically condemning anything from this world, even things – such as anger – that could easily be rejected as essentially vicious. In determining if an attitude is good or not, the intentions and circumstances of its use are the decisive factors; and the ultimate criterion to decide about the matter is that of conformity to the divine will: everything which, in a monotheistic effort of unification, is directed towards God is positive,[66] but everything which is governed by a will of its own, or worse, by a demonic will, can only be negative.[67] Therefore, violence is not inherently bad and is to be accepted theologically.

As can be seen, the exegesis of Matthew 11:12 clearly shows the evolution of the concept of violence in early monasticism. The author who most thoroughly examined the question of violence in reference to this *logion* of Jesus, however, is Pseudo-Macarius.[68] He develops the theme of violence at length, and handles it not only by making oneself instead of the other the target of violence but also by restricting it to an introductory phase of the ascetic journey.[69] To a certain extent, conversion to asceticism is an act of violence: it requires going beyond the usual physical practices and psychic paths in order to forge a new mental *ductus*,[70] that is, new habits.[71] The latter can imply an overtaking of human nature or a restoration of the prelapsarian nature of the protoplasts, depending on

[66] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 2.34 (*SC* 387, p. 142): 'It is impossible for a man to experience the sweetness of God as long as he is experiencing the sweetness of the world. But if, on the other hand, he tastes the sweetness of God, he will hate the world, as it is written, "No man can serve two masters" [Matthew 6:24]'.

[67] For the three wills of Ammonas, see n. 38 above.

[68] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.2 (pp. 184–84 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger).

[69] In this respect he is very close to Diadochus of Photice, *De perfectione spirituali* 93 (*SC* 5bis, p. 155): 'Therefore it is necessary in the beginning of combat to live out the holy commandments of God with a resolute will (βιαίῳ τινὶ θελήματι), so that seeing our vigilance and effort, our good Lord might send us readiness of will and great joy in serving his glorious designs'; trans. C. Ermatinger, *Following the Footsteps of the Invisible: The Complete Works of Diadochus of Photikē* (Kalamazoo, 2010) 122.

[70] On the mental *ductus*, see Diadochus of Photice, *De perfectione spirituali* 26 (*SC* 5bis, p. 97): 'Warriors should always keep custody of their thoughts so that the mind can discern the thoughts that pass through it and store in the memory banks those that are good and come from God, while casting out of nature's storage all those that are perverse or diabolical'; trans. Ermatinger, *Following the Footsteps of the Invisible*, 80.

[71] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.7 (p. 187 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger): 'so in like manner, if he only will, he forces (βιάζεται ἑαυτὸν) and compels himself to all the practices of virtue, and forms a good habit (ἔθος ἀγαθόν)'. In this condition, 'all the practices of virtue come to him like nature (ὡς φύσις)' (19.6). The theme of the 'habit' (ἕξις) is explored by Diadochus of Photice, *De perfectione spirituali* 29, 43, 59, 61, 93 (*SC* 5bis, pp. 99–100, 110, 119, 120–21, 154–55).

the author, though this is of little importance in this context: violence is the hallmark of a tearing away from the profane life of sin and from complacency in this world in order to enter the luminous realm of divine life. The emphasis is on the experiential aspect: violence is only a difficult time that one has to go through before reaching the sweetness of spiritual life. For, and this is absolutely clear to Pseudo-Macarius, violence does not concern only a specific aspect of the monastic regime,[72] it is the necessary condition to access all ascetic practices:[73] in fact, nothing of what the monk is or does would be bearable to the layperson. Violence is therefore the gateway to the monastic condition, which amounts to saying that it is both a departure from the human logic of familiarity (in which we only do what we know) and from advantageous exchange (that is, *do ut des*).[74] Pseudo-Macarius argues that the assimilation to God requires a leap into the deep void that separates the earthly from the celestial: in modern human terms, some would see here a major cognitive reconfiguration. Violence is the phenotype of the monk's resistance to his transformation. It is thus a necessary concept for understanding asceticism as a preparation for the transition from plurality to unity (in monastic terms: from διψυχία to ἁπλότης). The ascetic pushes himself in practising a discipline – 'in spite of an unwilling heart' – knowing that it will allow him to 'receive a taste of God'. This participation in God will be not simply a reward unconnected with the effort required to obtain it,[75] but the discovery that in this same

[72] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.4 (p. 184 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger): 'if a man forces himself (ἑαυτὸν βιάζεται) only to prayer, when he has no prayer, that he may obtain the grace of prayer, but will not force himself (ἑαυτὸν οὐ βιάζεται) to meekness and humility and charity and the rest of the Lord's commandments . . .'. It is certainly a *topos* in monastic literature that virtues (like vices, as a matter of fact) hold together and that practising one leads to the acquisition of them all. However, this text transcends the leitmotif of the genealogy of good and evil.

[73] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.3 (p. 184 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger): 'But before this, in coming to the Lord, a man must thus force himself (βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτὸν) to that which is good, even against the inclination of his heart . . . and force himself (βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτὸν) to charity, when he has no charity – force himself (βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτὸν) to meekness, when he has no meekness – force himself to pity, and to have a merciful heart – force himself (βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτὸν) to be looked down upon . . ., force himself (βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτὸν) to prayer when he has not spiritual prayer; and thus God, beholding him thus striving (ἀγωνιζόμενον), and compelling himself by force (βίᾳ ἑαυτὸν ἄγχοντα), in spite of an unwilling heart, gives him the true prayer of the Spirit, gives him true charity, meekness, bowels of mercies, true kindness, and in short fills him with the fruits of the Spirit'.

[74] Violence thus introduces ξενιτεία, the state of being estranged from oneself and the world.

[75] Even though it is also presented in this way in Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection III, 10.3.3 (*SC* 275, p. 160; trans. on facing page) through a recurring opposition between 'ce temps-ci (ὁ καιρὸς οὗτος)' and 'ce temps-là (ὁ καιρὸς ἐκεῖνος)': 'ce temps-ci est celui de la voie étroite et resserrée, ce temps-là verra le repos et la paix'. This is even clearer in Basil of Caesarea, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 1 (*PG* 31, col. 892): 'Ce monde est celui de la pénitence, celui-là de la récompense'; trans. *SC* 275, p. 160 (n. 2). However, this distinction rather concerns the difference between the

effort lies the goal for which it strives.[76] On the other hand, the true spiritual life is not defined by violence, which in fact emphasises the distance between the earthly and the celestial, and embodies the (imperfect) human effort. From the point of view of the collaboration between blessing and free will typical of Eastern Christianity, the author asserts that if violence is of man, God answers by taking his abode in him and, eventually, arousing in him an authentic spiritual life. In other words, the movement towards transcendence is understood as violence (on the human side), but is redefined as a blessing and an overcoming of this violence (on the side of God).

It should be stressed that what is presented here as a succession is not a temporal one, for asceticism is an incessant activity. As long as man lives and is driven by his vital energies (which are seen as a force of dispersion and fragmentation), he can only be at rest when he is violent with himself. The originality of monasticism does not lie in it having proposed for the first time the paradox of the cross as a symbol of victory, but in having transformed a theological principle into a 'total' way of life that aims to achieve the deification of man. Violence, then, is to be understood as an eminently mystical concept, which is at the same time a characteristic inherent to ascetic practices: it reunites these two dimensions of the spiritual life, so often separated,[77] and, from a human point of view, emphasises the radical otherness of this God whom we try to reach. In this regard, violence can become synonymous with beauty. It is fitting to quote here the words of Theodoret:

> Isaiah too exlaims, 'Who is this who comes from Edom, the red of his garments from Bozrah, himself comely in his apparel, force with strength? (βία μετὰ ἰσχύος)' [Isaiah 63:1]. For even human apparel did not hide the divine beauty (Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ ἀνθρωπεία στολὴ τὸ θεῖον κατεκάλυψε κάλλος); but even though clothed in this, he emits sparks from his beauty, to compel and entice the beholders to feel desire.[78]

instability of this world, where the transformation is never achieved once and for all, and the stability of the future world, where the result achieved will be permanently fixed. It does not contradict the paradox under discussion here.

[76] Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae*, Collection II, 19.2 (pp. 183–84 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger): 'one day, what he now does by force (μετὰ βίας) with a reluctant heart, he may do willingly, accustoming himself (ἐθίζων ἑαυτὸν) always to what is good, and being ever mindful of the Lord, and in much love waiting for Him in the Holy Spirit'. Cf., at the end of the homily (19.9 [p. 187 Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger]): 'we resting in God in His Kingdom, and God resting in us world without end'.

[77] L. Tinsley, *The French Expressions for Spirituality and Devotion: A Semantic Study* (Washington, 1953) 274.

[78] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 31.19 (*SC* 257, p. 308); trans. R. M. Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria by Theodoret of Cyrrhus* (Kalamazoo, 1985) 203. For the concept of violence in the *Historia religiosa*, see in more detail Chapter 14 by De Wet, this volume.

Moreover, in his reflection on the insatiable desire of God, Gregory of Nyssa states that the ascent of the soul – which is achieved through a mortification of the flesh and the intellect – can reach a point where the unspeakable beauty of the One strikes and wounds the one who contemplates it, which obliges the Cappadocian to explain the meaning of this violent language to describe an experience of the divine.[79]

Conclusion

The insistence on the notion of violence and its conceptual elaboration in monastic thought opened a door. A word was introduced into the lexicon of the desert that, despite all caution, was susceptible to being taken literally. It can be argued that the crowds of violent monks that we hear about in the sources, no doubt little predisposed to speculate, claimed for their own ends this word otherwise used in an allegorical or mystical (that is, paradoxical) context.[80] The transition from symbolic to physical violence seems to involve a fall into the trap of the 'disease of language', to put it in the words of Max Müller.[81] It is indeed true that the ambiguities of the ascetic warlike language are numerous.[82] Analogies can be made, *mutatis mutandis*, with the birth of a language of violence after the affirmation of monotheism in the Bible. According to the thesis of Othmar

[79] Gregory of Nyssa, *Homiliae in Canticum canticorum* 12 (p. 359 Langerbeck): 'Now to some these expressions will seem to be suited more to one [the Bride, which is the soul] who is bewailing her lot than to one who is rejoicing – *struck*, I mean, and *wounded* and *took my veil away*. But for one who looks closely into the meaning of the statements, they are the utterances of a person who is glorying in things of the greatest beauty'; trans. R. A. Norris Jr., *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Song of Songs* (Atlanta, 2012) 379.

[80] If it is true that 'la mystique est une manière de parler', it abounds among early monastic authors. Cf. M. de Certeau, *La fable mystique: XVI^e^–XVII^e^ siècle*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1982) 156.

[81] F. M. Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language* (London, 1861) 11. For the terms symbolic (cultural) and physical violence, see the General Introduction, p. 3.

[82] E.g. Diadochus of Photice, *De perfectione spirituali* 98 (*SC* 5bis, p. 160): 'Impassibility does not consist in not being attacked by demons, because then we would all have to depart from this world, as the Apostle says, but in remaining undefeated when we are attacked by them. Thus, the iron-armored warriors sustain the shots of their enemies, hear the report of the shot, and they even see almost all of the arrows shot at them, but they are undefeated when attacked thanks to the solidity of their battle armor. They are dressed for battle and trust in the iron that protects them. But as regards us, covered in the armor of the holy light, with the helmet of salvation, let us destroy the dark phalanxes of demons through our good works. For sure, it is not merely our not committing evil which makes us pure, but our forceful rejection of things evil through our attention to the good'; trans. Ermatinger, *Following the Footsteps of the Invisible*, 126.

Keel,[83] monotheism was contaminated by a translation of the properties of language adopting a literal understanding of the codes of monarchic representation recovered from Assyrian law and used figuratively to depict the link between God and his people. Diverted from its primary purpose, this language was used to represent an exclusivist theology and, eventually, a violent act of religious intransigence: in this way the representation could become an antecedent for a concrete application.

A rigorously monotheistic theology such as that employed by the monks (whose name insists on being unified and united with God alone),[84] which demands a radical recapitulation of the whole in the One, can only remain peaceful insofar as the One stays rigorously incomprehensible (in the sense of a negative theology), which seems to be the aim of mystical reflection (in line with the Origenist current of early monasticism). Once one has the pretention to define and appropriate this first principle or make it into a personal entity (which is exactly what the anthropomorphites did,[85] who defeated the Origenists during the crisis of 399),[86] the monotheistic tension – with its language of violence – becomes a formidable weapon of war against the other.[87] The words of Antony, at the dawn of the monastic phenomenon, already sound like a grim warning: 'God is One, that is to say, Unity of intellectual substance. You should understand this,

[83] O. E. Keel, 'Monotheismus. Ein göttlicher Makel? Über eine allzu bequeme Anklage', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (30–31 October 2004) 68, cited by J. Assmann, *Non avrai altro Dio: il monoteismo e il linguaggio della violenza* (Bologna, 2007) 90–95. See also Kippenberg, this volume, p. 18.

[84] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Systematic Collection 21.4 (*SC* 498, p. 200): 'An elder was asked, "What sort of person must the monk (τὸν μοναχόν) be?" and he answered, "In my opinion, as one alone relating to one alone (ὡς μόνος πρὸς μόνον)"'.

[85] See in particular the *Life of Aphou* (pp. 7–13 Rossi), where the protagonist corrects the 'mistake' of Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria who insists on the distance between God and human. Cf. G. Gould, 'The Image of God and the Anthropomorphite Controversy in Fourth Century Monasticism', in R. J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta* (Leuven, 1992) 549–57; F. Ledegang, 'Anthropomorphites and Origenists in Egypt at the End of the Fourth Century', in W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (eds.), *Origeniana septima* (Leuven, 1999) 375–79; A. Golitzin, 'The Vision of God and the Form of Glory: More Reflections on the Anthropomorphite Controversy of AD 399', in J. Behr, A. Louth and D. Conomos (eds.), *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY, 2003) 273–97.

[86] A classic study on this topic is E. A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992).

[87] In the case of Egypt, the transition from an ascetic to a social violence was actively promoted during the Origenist crisis of 399; see D. H. Raynor, 'Non-Christian Attitudes to Monasticism', in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica XVIII* (Leuven, 1989) 267–73 at 269: 'These incidents give us a clue that Theophilus in the last decade of the century was antagonising the high-minded monks who wished to maintain their withdrawal from the world. The monks who were drawn to him, by contrast, would be those who welcomed involvement in worldly concerns and an active anti-pagan role'.

beloved, that in all places where there is not harmony, men draw wars upon themselves . . .'.[88]

The unity of God is the basis for the unity sought by the monk, the μονοτροπία (the state of being one and unified in oneself and with God).[89] As we have said, the conflict is unleashed against the self and understood as an ascetic effort in which violence represents the tension of a difference which must become a unity, of a distance which must be undone: the greater this tension/distance is, the more violent the resorption of otherness seems to be. Indeed, violence arises from this tension, which cannot leave the difference as it is but must dissolve it. However, this violence only concerns the self which embraces an incomprehensible and indefinable otherness: as long as the absolute is paradoxical, so is violence. This incomprehensible absolute which undoes the difference in the paradox ends up being posited as a definite God, associated with a known tradition and theology; and the self is susceptible to being widened to include first the monastic community, then the body of Christians and finally a world which is the creation of God.[90] At that point, the internal enemies, which are designated by metaphors (like the 'invisible' Nubians of the *Life of Aaron*),[91] can be taken literally, as external enemies opposing the perfect monotheistic recapitulation. The μονοτροπία of the self now extends its scope to include the others: it is no longer the end of a paradoxical spiritual journey, but the concrete objective of a social standardisation, and as a result the stimulus of a committed and militant attitude towards the world.[92]

[88] Antony, *Epistulae* 6.13–14 (*CSCO* 148, p. 38); trans. D. J. Chitty, *The Letters of Saint Antony the Great* (Oxford, 1975) 9.

[89] A. Guillaumont, *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien: pour une phénoménologie du monachisme* (Bégrolles-en-Mauge, 1979) 51–60.

[90] Cf. F. Vecoli, *Il sole e il fango: puro e impuro tra i padri del deserto* (Rome, 2007) 125–28. In particular, for the metaphor of the church as the body of the monk in the works of Shenoute, see C. T. Schroeder, '"A Suitable Abode for Christ": The Church Building as Symbol of Ascetic Renunciation in Early Monasticism', *ChHist* 73 (2004) 472–521, esp. pp. 494–500.

[91] *Life of Aaron* 93 (p. 120 Dijkstra and Van der Vliet).

[92] Note the way in which the saint is criticised in *Vita Alexandri Acoemetae* 40 (*PO* 6, p. 689): 'A certain subdeacon and arrogant man named Malchus approached the bishop and said, "My authority in the courts was the one source of revenue I had, and the monk Alexander has deprived me of this. Not only that, but he has also stripped the Church of its glory: our sudden discovery of this 'tutor' has made us a laughingstock to all. This is the conjurer who made the city rebel in our blessed father Porphyry's day and caused him countless evils. This is the one who cast soot in the eyes of heretics. This is the one who terrifies bishops and magistrates, perhaps even demons. Everywhere it is the same single-minded one (μονότροπος)"'; trans. D. F. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002) 272–73.

CHAPTER 14

The Discipline of Domination: Asceticism, Violence and Monastic Curses in Theodoret's Historia Religiosa

Chris L. de Wet

Introduction

The concept of asceticism is notoriously difficult to define, and we still cannot say that there is one 'accepted' definition. What we have are varying representations and propositions from ancient authors of the ascetic project, each with different emphases and goals in mind.[1] Rather than straightjacketing an ancient author or literary work within a preconceived notion of asceticism, it should rather be asked how the author understands and utilises ascetic discourse and practice, and how this particular utilisation intersects with other related religious, cultural and political concepts and phenomena. One phenomenon with which asceticism has been shown to interact is that of violence. But the relationship between violence and ascetic discourse and practice has been shown to be quite complex.[2] The notion that asceticism and acts of violence are not necessarily mutually exclusive has gained much ground in scholarly circles, and rightfully so.

Michael Gaddis, in particular, has made an explicit link between asceticism and violence.[3] But it remains an ambiguous link.[4] On the one hand,

[1] Although I will challenge some of the findings of his work, the most nuanced approach to ancient Christian asceticism is provided by R. Valantasis, who successfully shows the varying dimensions of ascetic discourse, practice and subjectivities in his 'Constructions of Power in Asceticism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63 (1995) 775–821, 'A Theory of the Social Function of Asceticism', in V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (eds.), *Asceticism* (Oxford, 1995) 544–52, and *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Eugene, OR, 2008). See also S. Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1996). On the continuities and discontinuities between Christian asceticism and non-Christian asceticism in Antiquity, see J. A. Francis, *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, PA, 1995); C. Louis-Combet, *Ascétisme et eudémonisme chez Platon* (Besançon, 1997) 7–11.

[2] See Chapter 13 by Vecoli, this volume.

[3] M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2005) 235–42. But there are also numerous others, such as D. F. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002); T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009), esp. pp. 108–43.

[4] As Gaddis himself admits, *'There Is No Crime'*, 148. See also Mayer, this volume, pp. 252–53.

feats of self-discipline and rigorous asceticism could kindle such a measure of self-control in an individual that it might keep anger and rage, which could spill out into violence, at bay. On the other hand, asceticism has been shown to be a major factor in religious radicalisation.[5] But asceticism was not simply one of the factors that caused violence. In this analysis I am interested in determining how the integrated system of discourses and practices that constitutes Late Antique Christian asceticism operates as a system of violence in itself. If the question of asceticism as violence has been addressed, perhaps we may even better understand how asceticism perpetuates religious radicalisation and acts of violence that take place indirectly and outside of the ascetic system itself. In what ways, then, could discourses and practices of asceticism be perceived as instances of discursive or physical violence? What are the characteristics and aims of this manifestation of violence? According to what assumptions and by means of what mechanisms is ascetic power exacted, and upon whom?

To apply such an enquiry to the whole corpus of Late Antique monastic and hagiographic (and even homiletic) literature would be a far too ambitious project for this chapter, and works against the crucial assumption that there are different varieties of ascetic discourses in early Christian literature. Rather, my aim here is to delineate the discursive foundations and dynamics of asceticism as a possible form of violence from one case study, and to highlight some of the opportunities for better understanding the intersection between asceticism and violence – especially violence related to religious radicalisation – more generally. The case study that I have selected comes from Theodoret's *Historia religiosa*, a hagiographical work listing numerous *vitae* of Syrian monks.

My reasons for selecting this work are, first, that Theodoret provides us with a wide variety of ascetic practices and *personae* from the Syrian provinces, but he does limit his selection of monks both geographically (the areas around Antioch, Apamea, Beroea, Chalcis and Zeugma) and, of course, according to 'orthodox' principles (that is, the monks fit within the Nicene paradigm of Christian thought and politics), as Philip Wood has shown. In a sense, then, Theodoret conveniently helps us with the delimitation of the data.[6] Second, it is not only the accounts of the monks themselves as filtered by Theodoret that are useful, but also the ways in

[5] See n. 3 above, the General Introduction, pp. 2, 5–6, Mayer, pp. 261–64, and Vecoli, pp. 306–308, all this volume.

[6] P. Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ': Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400–585)* (Oxford, 2010) 38–40.

which Theodoret fashions himself as a hagiographer, mediator and regulator of ascetic practice – not to mention a fighter against heresy – that prove beneficial for the enquiry. Third, the polemical nature of Theodoret's work, permeated with the language of struggle and warfare, lends itself quite well to the current analysis of asceticism and violence. I will elaborate more on these points, collectively, below.

Theodoret (393–466 CE) probably wrote his *Historia religiosa* in 440, based on internal evidence, and certainly no later than 444. By this time he was already the bishop of Cyrrhus (consecrated in 423), a city north-east of Syrian Antioch, where he was born.[7] What stands out in this work is Theodoret's personal contact from an early age with many of the monks. Although the *Historia religiosa* is written in Greek, Theodoret seems to have been able also to speak Syriac, and thus communicated freely with the monks.

Historia religiosa provides us with a strategic selection of *vitae* about Syrian monks with the purpose of showing continuity between their lives and the lives of biblical heroes of faith, especially Moses, Elijah, Elisha and the apostles,[8] and, perhaps more importantly, to exhibit continuity with Nicene tradition.[9] This continuity, however, is mostly described in terms of military rhetoric. 'For ecclesiastical historians in the fifth century, of whom Theodoret was one, the victory over the Arians was a crucial foundation myth in the creation of an orthodox empire,' Wood remarks, 'and Nicaea would become the touchstone of orthodoxy even in a Persian Christianity that had never been affected by Arianism'.[10] In *Historia religiosa*, some monks engage directly in the battle against Arianism, like James of Nisibis and Aphrahat, while others do so from a distance through prayer. Parallel to the level of physical warfare, Theodoret sketches a raging spiritual war, in which the role of the monks and their magical relics and spiritual discipline is indispensable.

[7] On the dating, structure, composition and provenance of *Historia religiosa*, see R. M. Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria by Theodoret of Cyrrhus* (Kalamazoo, 1985) ix–xxxvii; also the introductions in P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, *Théodoret de Cyr: histoire des moines de Syrie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1977–79). More generally: T. Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor, 2002).

[8] D. Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia, 2004) 29–32; Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ'*, 39–44.

[9] Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 32, notes that Theodoret was in 'the process of producing a world intertwined with the world of the Bible'. See also J.-N. Guinot, *Théodoret de Cyr: exégète et théologien*, vol. 1 (Paris, 2012) 135–56.

[10] Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ'*, 44. See also H. Leppin, 'Zum kirchenpolitischen Kontext von Theodorets Mönchsgeschichte', *Klio* 78 (1996) 212–30; A. M. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley, 2011) 3–7.

However, the monks are by no means perfect. When describing their ascetic practices, some of which were often very extreme and strange, Theodoret highlights his own agency as a judge, regulator and even a reformer of ascetic practice, and one who guards the monks from anything that may appear heterodox (or heteropractical, at least).[11] Theodoret therefore acts as more than a Greek guide to the world of Syriac-speaking 'barbarian' monks. As a bishop, he aims to steadily regulate and subtly reform the ascetic practices of the monks.[12] Although Theodoret militarises the monks quite often, in this constantly raging war the bishop takes on the role of the general, the figure who guides and channels the military violence of the spiritual army. The monk Zeno actually goes so far as to call monks civilians and priests soldiers.[13] For Theodoret the monks of the *Historia religiosa* are the soldiers in the great spiritual battle of his age, and like Homer wrote to memorialise the heroes of Greek myth, so too does Theodoret aim to memorialise his soldier-monks. In Theodoret's mind, however, the greatest war is the one fought between the soul and the body, to which we now turn.

Asceticism and/as Dominance: Theodoret's Ascetic Discourse and the Violence of the Self

Ascetic practice gives the subject power. Theodoret paints his monks in highly masculine terms.[14] They are not like the 'womanish and effeminate' men that are often painted on panels in the city.[15] Yet, Theodoret also does not sketch the monks in the colours of traditional Roman masculinity. Ascetic power is strange and foreign in *Historia religiosa.* From the outside, and to Roman eyes, the monks would appear quite barbarous.[16] Their unkempt appearance does not mirror the habitus of the urban philosopher. Many of them have long hair, wear animal skins and have a physique akin to someone living under conditions of famine. The deportment of many of the monks would appear rather slavish. Some of them are willingly chained with bonds, irons and collars, which cause their necks

[11] Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ'*, 50.
[12] Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, 4–7; Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ'*, 50–51.
[13] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 12.4 (*SC* 234, pp. 464–66).
[14] On the construction of the monk as a masculine and militant figure, see M. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago, 2001).
[15] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* pr. 3 (*SC* 234, pp. 128–30). The translation used in this chapter is that of Price, *History of the Monks of Syria*.
[16] Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ'*, 39–44, especially highlights the 'barbarizing' of the monks by Theodoret.

and backs to be permanently bent over, gazing to the ground like slaves who fear making eye-contact. By traditional Roman standards, the figure of the slave is the absolute opposite of the freeborn masculine man.[17] In Theodoret's own words, they live on a diet in which they 'eat grass like irrational animals' rather than men.[18] In a world where one's diet was directly implicated in one's masculine self-fashioning,[19] such a statement would indeed be disconcerting. In some cases the monks are even mistaken for animals, like the case in which a shepherd initially suspects a bent-over monk, Acepsimas, to be a wolf.[20]

But in his description of barbarous and animal-like monks, Theodoret reaches back to an old Syrian Christian tradition, which Wood traces back to Tatian, that juxtaposes the barbarian origins of Christianity with traditional Greek culture.[21] '[W]e do not portray their bodily features nor do we display for those in ignorance representations of them, but we sketch the forms of invisible souls and display unseen wars and secret struggles,' Theodoret makes clear in his prologue to *Historia religiosa*, '[f]or such too is the nature of the enemy: bodiless, invisible, encroaching unperceived, plotting secretly, setting ambush and attacking suddenly'.[22] What makes Theodoret's monks so masculine? What makes them manly soldiers fighting in 'unseen wars and secret struggles'? Theodoret writes:

> Repressing the body and subduing it (τὸ σῶμα πιέσαντες καὶ δουλαγωγήσαντες), to use the apostolic phrase [1 Corinthians 9:27], they soothed the inflammation of the irascible part and compelled the madness of the desires to be at rest. So by fasting and sleeping on the ground they lulled the passions and put a stop to their restiveness; they compelled (κατηνάγκασαν) the body to make a treaty (σπείσασθαι) with the soul and put an end to their innate war (πόλεμον).[23]

The first and most challenging struggle is that between the soul and the body, between human nature and one's resolve or mindset (γνώμη). It should be understood here that the 'peace treaty' between body and soul is not one born out of negotiation, but facilitated through coercion, as many

[17] C. L. de Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oakland, 2015) 127–69.
[18] Theodoret mentions this in the epilogue ('On Divine Love') of *Historia religiosa* 31.2 (*SC* 257, p. 260).
[19] T. M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1998).
[20] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 15.2 (*SC* 257, pp. 18–20).
[21] Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ'*, 41–43.
[22] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* pr. 4 (*SC* 234, p. 130).
[23] Ibid., pr. 5 (*SC* 234, p. 132).

ancient 'peace' treaties were. The ascetic coerces (καταναγκάζω; this term can even denote a sense of torture)[24] the body into making peace with the soul. To this end, the body is repressed and subdued – literally, the body is made a slave (δουλαγωγέω), as per 1 Corinthians 9:27. In the Syriac tradition, this radical subjugation of the body and renunciation of physical pleasure was known as *msarrqūtā* (ܡܣܪܪܩܘܬܐ).[25] At the heart of Theodoret's understanding of discipline, or ἄσκησις, lies an act of coercion, an act of psychic violence against the physical body and its limbs. But the nature of this psychic violence is very specific: asceticism becomes an act of dominance.[26]

Here I also depart somewhat from Valantasis' understanding of asceticism – at least in terms of the nature of ascetic discourse in *Historia religiosa.* He notes that asceticism is primarily oriented against dominant (social) structures or institutions, and also oriented to subversion.[27] Now this is, of course, true in many cases of ancient and modern ascetic discourse. But asceticism is not always subversive. As I will argue below, asceticism is not subversive in *Historia religiosa*. Rather, ascetic discourse operates as a hegemonic discourse of dominance, power and violence.

In his excellent study of contemporary Indian asceticism, Carl Olson demonstrates that some forms of asceticism are essentially characterised by a cycle of violence and dominance. Olson makes an ingenious link between the ascetic and the demon, and the violence associated with their subjectivities and practices:

> [T]he ascetic is the initiator of violence, the object of violence, and the termination of violence, which eliminates any cycle of violence and any risk of vengeance. By perpetuating violence upon him/herself, the ascetic controls it and terminates it when he achieves his/her goal of liberation or in some cases power … [V]iolence empowers demons and ascetics, and lucidly expresses their power. By exercising violence, ascetics empower themselves in sharp contrast to others without power, a vast majority of people, but demons empower themselves for a brief time because their power is destined to be overcome by the superior power of divine beings or

[24] LSJ s.v. καταναγκάζω II.

[25] On radical renunciation, or *msarrqūtā*, see S. P. Brock, 'Radical Renunciation: The Ideal of *Msarrqûtâ*', in R. D. Young and M. J. Blanchard (eds.), *To Train His Soul in Books: Syrian Asceticism in Early Christianity* (Washington, 2011) 122–33. On the relationship between the image of enslavement and radical ascetic renunciation, see C. L. de Wet, *The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought* (London, 2018) 23–28.

[26] Cf. Chapter 3 by Eidinow, this volume, for the dominance of the body in binding spells from classical Athens.

[27] Valantasis, *Making of the Self*, 108–15.

> ascetic figures . . . [T]here is something demonic about the ascetic because he/she uses his/her power to inflict violence against others in many narratives, creating an intimate relationship between the ascetic, demonic, and violence.[28]

My purpose here is not to expound on this link between asceticism and demonisation. Rather, I am concerned with asceticism as an act of dominance, expressed especially in the self-violence of ascetic practice,[29] and what I will label the 'asceticisation of the other' by means of the monastic curse.[30]

What, then, are the subsets of the asceticism-as-dominance framework that we have in the *Historia religiosa*? First, and based on the discussion above, Theodoret's asceticism relies on the primary distribution of the body in terms of territory and the activity of the soul in terms of security, colonisation and governance. When ascetic discourse becomes a discourse of territory, colonisation and security, ascetic practices operate as the mechanisms by which dominance is enforced. Bodies and limbs can be both the enemy and the battleground in the war between the soul and demonic forces. This gives rise to a discourse in which the soul must practically colonise the body limb by limb through ascetic discipline. The potent language and imagery of slavery further undergirds ascetic practice as an act of dominance. This colonisation and enslavement of the body, for Theodoret, is not a peaceful or easy endeavour. Ascetic disciplines such as fasting, vigils and immuration, to mention but a few, could easily double as forms of torture like starvation, sleep deprivation and confinement. When psychically dominated, the human limbs cooperate with the soul, and no longer with the Devil. The weapons of the Devil are the limbs of the body. Asceticism therefore disarms demonic forces, rendering them powerless. The powerlessness of demons is a recurrent theme throughout the *Historia religiosa.* The limbs include the human senses, which are now guarded like a fortress on a hill.[31]

Second, the dominance of asceticism can also function punitively. Bodily limbs, especially if they are in the hands of evil forces, can pose a great threat to the soul. Thus, it stands to reason that if the limbs do not

[28] C. Olson, *Indian Asceticism: Power, Violence, and Play* (Oxford, 2015) 114–15. On demons and monks, see especially D. Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

[29] Olson, *Indian Asceticism*, 137–39, also considers ascetic practice as self-violence (and even masochism).

[30] The curse pronounced by the ascetic is also a crucial feature in Olson's analysis, ibid., 129–34.

[31] John Chrysostom, *De inani gloria et de educandis liberis* (*SC* 188), uses a similar framework of sensory security in his advice to fathers on how to raise their sons.

concede to the control of the soul, if corporeal territory keeps resisting psychic dominance, the limbs themselves may be cut off or disabled, either temporarily or permanently. This was not an unfamiliar view within moral-philosophical tradition. For example, the late second-century CE sophist, Maximus of Tyre, wrote in response to the threat of diseases of the soul:

> [W]hen a man's soul festers and rots with a devouring disease that is forever advancing its depredations and seizing whatever lies next in its path, then the bodily faculties must be excised and taken away from it, as if one were taking away a robber's fists, a roue's eyes, a glutton's tongue (or belly; γαστέρα). Because if you try to arrange for jury, prison, and executioners to deal with the disease, it will be off again before you can act, and will steal a march on you.[32]

Maximus utilises similar military rhetoric (and medical rhetoric, as Theodoret also does) when making sense of the relationship between the soul and the limbs of the body. In this mode of ascetic dominance the coercion of discipline moves to the violence of punishment; corporeal territory is punished. A good example of this is found in Theodoret's narration of Eusebius of Teleda. He says that Eusebius, after looking at ploughmen on a farm and delighting in the sight of earthly labour, fashioned chains that permanently bent his body forwards, as if he was bowing, so that he could only look to the ground.[33] In an extreme act of self-violence, Eusebius punishes his flesh like a disobedient slave. Through an act of punitive asceticism, we find here the refashioning of the body with the aim of resembling the habitus of a slave and a war captive, an ἀνδράποδον. The punitive ascetic technologies, like the chains, collars and tight enclosures, were often very personalised. James of Cyrrhestica had heavy chains connected to his body via a heavy collar and belt in such a way that they formed an X at the back, possibly signifying the first letter of Christ, the *chi*.[34]

Theodoret meticulously crafts ascetic practice in terms of self-violence, where the body may be bound and injured in order to ensure the security and health of the soul. Ascetic practice, more generally, may be considered as a process of self-mortification. Every discipline of the ascetic regimen, whether it be the monastic diet, sleep deprivation, exposure to environmental extremes, lack of bathing and so on, may be understood as

[32] Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 7.7.g.5–7.7.i.1; trans. M. B. Trapp, *Maximus of Tyre: The Philosophical Orations* (Oxford, 1997) 66.
[33] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 4.6 (*SC* 234, pp. 302–304).
[34] Ibid., 21.8 (*SC* 257, pp. 80–82).

hastening the cooling and drying of the body – essentially, the ageing of the body – until it becomes as cold and dry as a corpse.[35] Similarly, the entire range of ascetic disciplines can be understood as punitive tactics, including solitary confinement, hunger and thirst, chaining and collaring, environmental exposure and manual labour.

Third, ascetic practice has a purificatory dimension in *Historia religiosa.* The purification of asceticism enables the ascetic to perceive God more clearly. '[P]urifying his soul and constantly cleansing its eye, he perceived the vision of God,'[36] Theodoret says of Zeno, and of James of Nisibis: 'Purifying the eye of his thought, he prepared a clear mirror for the Holy Spirit'.[37] Having sight of God gives the monk access to special knowledge and foresight, and especially the ability to prophesy and to act as a judge.[38] The monk Macedonius, for instance, is described as a simple man, speaking Syriac alone but one who engaged fiercely and triumphantly with demons due to his 'simplicity of thought and purity of soul'.[39] At one point a young girl was possessed by a demon.[40] The girl's father implored Macedonius for his spiritual aid. When Macedonius attempts to dispel the demon, the tale takes on a more complicated turn. The demon tells Macedonius that it was compelled to enter the girl because of a magical enchantment, a love spell. The girl's father was furious and immediately sought the aid of the chief officials, and brought a charge against the man who had the spell cast. The problem, however, is that only the demon could witness to the magical spell. The father then calls Macedonius, who reluctantly agrees to join the proceedings. After replacing the judge, Macedonius forces the demon to appear and relate the truth.[41]

Moreover, the demon's testimony is treated just like that of a slave.[42] The demon is not able to tell the truth, and only confesses under 'the pressure of the greatest duress'.[43] The purification of the ascetic, then,

[35] C. L. de Wet, 'The Practice of Everyday Death: Thanatology and Self-Fashioning in John Chrysostom's *Thirteenth Homily on Romans*', *HTS Theological Studies* 71 (2015) 1–6.
[36] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 12.2 (*SC* 234, p. 462).
[37] Ibid., 1.3 (*SC* 234, p. 164). See also similar examples with Julian Saba in ibid., 2.16 (*SC* 234, pp. 230, 232), and Eusebius of Asikha in ibid., 18.1–2 (*SC* 257, pp. 52–56).
[38] E.g. ibid., 1.3 (*SC* 234, p. 164), 13.10–12 (*SC* 234, pp. 492–96).
[39] Ibid., 13.5 (*SC* 234, p. 484).
[40] The account is found in ibid., 13.10–12 (*SC* 234, pp. 492–96).
[41] Ibid., 13.11 (*SC* 234, p. 494).
[42] On the torturing of demons like slaves, see R. Wiśniewski, 'Suspended in the Air: On a Peculiar Case of Exorcism in Late Ancient Christian Literature', in T. Derda, J. Urbanik and M. Wecowski (eds.), *Euergesias Charin: Studies Presented to Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka by Their Disciples* (Warsaw, 2002) 363–80; De Wet, *Unbound God*, 85.
[43] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 13.11 (*SC* 234, p. 494).

enables him or her to battle more successfully in spiritual warfare, whether it means dominating the body, evil forces or heretics, or showing wise discernment in various judgements.

Fourth, asceticism in *Historia religiosa* is highly demonstrative and performative. Asceticism had to be visual, as Patricia Cox Miller notes: '[A]scetic behavior was a performance that petitioned an audience'.[44] But there is a tension in Theodoret's narration between the visible ascetic performances of the monks and the impetus of keeping one's piety secret so as not to appear proud or commit the sin of vainglory. Such is the description of Marcianus:

> [D]espite receiving such grace and being capable of great miracles, he was keen to hide his power, suspecting the machinations of the thief of virtue, for he sows secretly the passion of arrogance and tries to steal the fruit gathered with toil.[45]

Theodoret's role as mediator is also clarified in this instance; he often needs to persuade the monks to tell their stories. But it seems that the more the monks attempt to hide their spectacular power, the more it becomes manifest. But the demonstrative and performative nature of asceticism in *Historia religiosa* is not there to drive the audience to emulate the monks. The monks are viewed from the outside; the reader becomes a spectator.[46] Theodoret does not call for imitation of the monks, but for veneration. Their feats must inspire awe and fear.[47]

Finally, and most importantly, with Theodoret's stress on the continuity of his narratives with Nicene tradition, and their opposition to heresy, he positions his ascetics comfortably within the normative and hegemonic ecclesiastical structures of his day. As I have noted above, previous studies on asceticism like that of Valantasis have often highlighted the subversive nature of asceticism. Asceticism gave some individuals or groups the opportunity to fashion an identity or identities that were subversive and alternative within the dominant sphere.[48] In this regard, and perhaps most traditionally, asceticism has been viewed as discourses and practices of self-control, self-renunciation and self-mortification that transformed the

[44] P. C. Miller, 'Desert Asceticism and "The Body from Nowhere"', *JECS* 2 (1994) 137–53 at 138. Schor, *Theodoret's People*, 73, calls this type of asceticism 'theatrical asceticism'. See also Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 73–74.

[45] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 3.9 (*SC* 234, pp. 258–60).

[46] Price, *History of the Monks of Syria*, xxx.

[47] On the fear of the ascetic, see Olson, *Indian Asceticism*, 134–37.

[48] See also G. Flood, *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory and Tradition* (Cambridge, 2004) 200.

subject into a figure that imitates that of the martyr. This view aimed to establish continuity between martyrdom and asceticism.

Although Theodoret does not discount the imitation of the martyrs in the monks he describes,[49] bringing the identity of the monk closer to that of the martyr and even assimilating them seems secondary in his agenda. He seems more concerned with proving that the ascetics, despite their unconventional appearance and behaviour, were actually part of the 'mainstream' reaction against heresy and 'paganism'. And the moment that ascetic practice appears to become subversive and unorthodox, Theodoret steps in and subtly regulates and corrects the monk, with varying levels of success. By positioning the asceticism of *Historia religiosa* within the contemporary ecclesiastical hegemony, the factor of dominance within ascetic discourse and practice becomes more potent. Though not wholly devoid of tension, ascetic power and ecclesiastical (or episcopal) power are not at odds, but function within an interesting symbiosis.[50] Some monks even consent (though still somewhat reluctantly) to being ordained as priests, and take up leadership roles themselves by acting as priests and bishops of the surrounding villages.[51]

I have shown in this section that in the *Historia religiosa* asceticism is signified as a hegemonic act of dominance. But the violent ascetic mode of dominance is not always directed against the self in *Historia religiosa.* There are some instances where the 'other' and not the self becomes the object of ascetic power. In the following section I will argue that we also have a forced or coercive asceticism in *Historia religiosa*, where the other is unwillingly 'asceticised'. This asceticisation of the other is primarily evident in the phenomenon of the monastic curse.

The Monastic Curse: A Violent Asceticisation of the Other

What does Theodoret say about those persons, unlike the monks, whose souls have not dominated their bodies? Since Theodoret reads the relationship between soul and body as one of security and territory, such individuals pose a danger not only to the individual, but also to the entire social and ecclesiastical body politic. Since the monk is a combatant in the

[49] See e.g. Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 21.30 (*SC* 257, pp. 114–16). For a hagiographic work the length of the *Historia religiosa*, the theme of the martyrs and martyrdom appears seldom.

[50] This is a crucial point in Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*.

[51] See Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 13.4 (*SC* 234, pp. 480–82), 14.2 (*SC* 257, pp. 10–12), 15.4 (*SC* 257, p. 22), 17.4 (*SC* 257, pp. 38–40), 19.2 (*SC* 257, p. 60).

war against demonic forces, when the limbs of others become demonic weapons, the monk must respond.

The monastic response against these individuals is particularly evident in the monastic curse. Theodoret refers to several curses in the *Historia religiosa.* Peter Brown writes that 'the Syrians were notable cursers', and points out the curse (and exorcism) as an important feature of the monk as patron and mediator. The curse especially highlights, according to Brown, the power of these patrons that was accumulated through the hard work of ascetic practice.[52] These monastic curses, I will argue, should also be read as instances of domination by means of coercive or forced asceticism. The same subsets of the asceticism-as-dominance framework are also present here. Since the soul of the wicked person is unable to colonise its body, the soul of the monk reaches beyond its own subject and by divine power dominates the body of the wicked person. The language of power, δύναμις, permeates the curse narratives.[53] The curses are in almost all cases punitive, and may also function in a purifying manner, since the conduct of the wicked person is expected to change once the curse is lifted or its effects have settled. In *Historia religiosa* the curses are always publicised in some manner, making them effectively demonstrative and performative. The curses also firmly fix ascetic discourse in the position of a hegemonic discourse. When a monk pronounces a terrible curse, the monk is hardly in the position of a martyr. Rather, the monk occupies a position of absolute power and often delivers a judgement and blow (or leniency) on the wicked individual before imperial institutions of power have the chance.

It should be noted, however, that the monks are always the secondary initiators of the curse. God is seen as the primary agent in the cursing of another. When one accursed man begs a monk for mercy and to lift the curse, Theodoret says that the monk accepts the request but then also relays it to the Master, and only then is the curse lifted.[54] In this sense the monk acts as a mediator of divine power and judgement. In certain instances and for various reasons the monk does not even consciously pronounce a curse. Nevertheless, the monk occupies a clear mediatory role in the coercive asceticism that is affected in the divine curse.[55]

[52] P. R. L. Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *JRS* 61 (1971) 80–101 at 87–88 (repr. in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* [Berkeley, 1982] 103–52 at 122–23).
[53] Brown, 'Rise and Function of the Holy Man', 85–86 (repr. in his *Society and the Holy*, 116–18).
[54] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 1.4 (*SC* 234, p. 168), 14.4 (*SC* 257, p. 14).
[55] This mediatory role is located both between the monk and the patrons, as Brown has shown, and between the monk and God.

Some curses are simply meant to instil fear and awe in an individual or group. When James of Nisibis enters Persia, he sees a judge deliver an unjust ruling. James then curses not the judge, but a stone that is lying nearby, causing the stone to explode into a thousand pieces. 'The bystanders were panic-stricken,' Theodoret says, 'and the judge, now filled with terror, revoked his earlier verdict and decreed instead a just one'.[56] Here two important features of the monastic curse become apparent: in a punitive sense, most of the curses act as deterrents and function in a didactic sense. The accursed persons become examples of the consequences of opposing ascetic power, and act as a warning for those who might oppose ascetic power.

James of Nisibis also pronounced another more serious curse:

> James went to Persia, to observe the piety planted there and convey to it the help it needed. As he was passing by a spring, some girls who were standing at washing-troughs and cleaning clothes under their feet, far from feeling awe at his novel appearance, cast aside all modesty and stared at the man of God with brazen looks and eyes dead to shame. They did not cover their heads, nor even let down their clothes, which they had tucked up. Indignant at this, the man of God decided to display God's power opportunely, in order to free them from impiety by means of a miracle. So he cursed the spring, at which the stream immediately vanished away; and then he cursed the girls, and chastised their impudent youth with premature grey hair. His words had immediate effect: their black hair was changed, and they looked like young tree, decked in spring with the leaves of autumn.[57]

The tale ends with the villagers begging James to restore the spring and the hair of the girls. The spring is then indeed restored, and he even agrees to restore the girls' hair. But because they do not present themselves, James lets the punishment stand.

The greying of the girls serves as an exercise in ascetic power. The curse against Persian girls who did not show James of Nisibis the proper respect would be considered fitting yet ironic. Like ascetic practice, ageing, in ancient medical thought, was seen as a process of cooling and drying.[58] Both Aristotle and Galen understood grey hair as a type of frost or mildew accompanied by old age.[59] Thus Theodoret also notes that the girls appear like young spring trees with the leaves of chilly autumn. In early Christian ascetical theology, however, ageing was considered in a positive light, since

[56] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 1.6 (*SC* 234, p. 170).
[57] Ibid., 1.4 (*SC* 234, pp. 166–68).
[58] E.g. Galen, *Hygiene* 5.8; see T. G. Parkin, *Old Age in the Roman World: A Cultural and Social History* (Baltimore, 2004) 251, 420.
[59] K. Cokayne, *Experiencing Old Age in Ancient Rome* (London, 2003) 11.

it was seen as nature's or God's ἄσκησις. Ageing naturally destroyed the libido, and was, according to John Chrysostom, for instance, a teacher of self-control (σωφροσύνη).[60] Sexual desire was linked to the elements of heat and wetness.[61] When James turns their hair grey, the implication is that he forces nature's ascetic bridle on to the girls. By becoming grey, they also become (or at least appear to become) cold, dry and, most likely, barren, even though they still appear to be young. Just like the spring, which became dry and barren – veiled by the earth, so to speak – the girls (appear to) become cold and dry. When the girls do not show up to repent, Theodoret makes it clear: '[James] let the punishment stand, as a lesson in self-control (σωφροσύνης), a reason for good behavior, and a perpetual and clear reminder of the power of God'.[62] Ageing, as a technology of coercive asceticism, was meant to teach the girls σωφροσύνη, and also to remind them of the consequences of not respecting the power of God and ascetic power.

'As the water of the spring ran away, and looking at each other's heads they saw that drastic alteration, they perceived their punishment, and ran into the town to tell what had happened,' Theodoret tells his audience, 'At this the townsfolk rushed out to meet the great James, and begged him to calm his anger and remit the punishment'.[63] Here the demonstrative and performative purpose of the curse is achieved; as with the tale of the judge and the exploding stone, in this story the perpetrators and the whole village, in fact, are struck with fear and awe. The punishment stands as a lesson in virtue.

Another curse in *Historia religiosa* relates the story of a young and chaste servant girl who was working for a former general and debauchee. When the general wanted to force the girl into marriage, she fled to a convent. After flogging her mother for information, the general snatches the girl away from the convent. But before he can 'satisfy his lechery', he is struck with blindness.[64]

This tale takes place within the *vita* of Peter the Galatian, although he does not pronounce the curse. The curse seems to be a protective safeguard for the girl who aspires to the monastic life. The girl is the indirect or passive 'initiator' of the curse. It may be that because she is young and female (and possibly enslaved), and only starting her ascetic journey,

[60] C. L. de Wet, 'Grumpy Old Men? Gender, Gerontology, and the Geriatrics of Soul in John Chrysostom', *JECS* 24 (2016) 491–521.
[61] A. Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* (New York, 1996) 129–78.
[62] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 1.4 (*SC* 234, p. 168). [63] Ibid., 1.4 (*SC* 234, p. 168).
[64] Ibid., 9.12 (*SC* 234, pp. 426–30).

Theodoret hesitates to afford her the agency of cursing. God initiates the curse only indirectly on behalf of the girl.

The punishment of blinding this man would be considered fitting. Theodoret notes his sin as being ἀκολαστία, that is, sexual licentiousness and perversity. Maximus of Tyre, as quoted above, also noted that the punishment for ἀκολαστία should be the removal of the eyes.[65] The eyes of the general are removed so as not to be used as a demonic weapon against the saints. As with the Persian grey-haired girls, the punishment of this man is also didactic. The lesson the general is taught is to never oppress and pursue the holy ones of God.

At this point we should note that both of these curses betray an important punitive tactic present in *Historia religiosa*, namely that of marking. As a punitive tactic, marking implies leaving a sign on the body by scarring, marring or in any other way visibly reducing the parts of the body.[66] The protagonist monks in *Historia religiosa* all have visibly marked bodies. Some monks are marked by chains, collars and irons, and others by their starved bodies and pale complexions. A mark does not always have to be physical. It may also be symbolic. But most importantly, as Michel Foucault has noted, 'the individual who committed the infraction will be marked by an element of memory and recognition'.[67] Just as Theodoret is at pains to memorialise his monks through their ascetic prowess, he also memorialises these shameful individuals by means of the ascetic violence imposed upon them through the curse. The hoary heads of the Persian girls are, to Theodoret, 'a perpetual and clear reminder (ὑπόμνημα) of the power of God'.[68]

In other cases the mark of the accursed is temporary, as it would have been with the Persian girls, to also show the mercy and leniency of which ascetic power is capable. For instance, a shepherd once mistook the monk Acepsimas for a wolf, and when the shepherd prepared his sling to attack, he temporarily lost the power of his hand. This is another indirect curse that almost automatically protects the ascetic. The temporary disability brings the shepherd to repentance. But this leniency, too, serves to emphasise the extent of and extremes to which ascetic power could be exercised.[69] Leniency and mercy are demonstrations of power. Leniency, as a lack of violent retaliation, affirms dominance rather than negating it.

[65] See n. 32 above.
[66] On marking as a punitive tactic in penal societies, see M. Foucault, *On the Punitive Society: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1972–1973* (New York, 2015) 7–11.
[67] Ibid., 7. [68] See Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 1.4 (*SC* 234, p. 168), n. 62 above.
[69] Ibid., 15.2 (*SC* 257, pp. 18–20).

One of the most common punitive tactics, namely confinement, is also important in *Historia religiosa*.[70] The work is full of immured monks and monks locking themselves away in cells. However, in the cursing of the wealthy landowner and Antiochene council member, Letoius, we witness how confinement can also be applied coercively. When Letoius visited a village over which he ruled, he 'demanded crops from the peasants with more severity than was needed'. The monk Maësymas, who was acting as a patron for the village, begged Letoius to show kindness and pity on the peasants. But, according to Theodoret, 'he remained implacable, until he learnt by experience the penalty for obstinacy'.[71] When Letoius wanted to depart in his carriage, the carriage suddenly became stuck to the ground. No measure of pulling or pushing could dislodge it. When a well-wisher of Letoius told him that it was a curse from the monk, Letoius jumped out of the carriage and begged the monk to lift the curse. The monk concedes and the carriage is loosened.

The punishment of Letoius is also fitting. As he was implacable and steadfast in his attitude towards the villagers, his whole entourage becomes unmovable. The monk confines Letoius to the very land he thinks he owns, and imprisons him, so to speak, within his carriage and on his land, the one symbol of his nobility and mobility. In a manner Letoius also becomes bound to the land, just like the villagers. And once again, the hegemony of ascetic power affirms itself, violently, over other forms and representations of power.

Finally, in the marking of the bodies of the girls and the general it is not only their offences that are visible, but more importantly, it is the violent hegemony of ascetic power that is displayed in the cursed and marked body. Many of the cursed persons in *Historia religiosa* (with the exception of the Persian girls) are persons in positions of power. We have an unfair judge, a lecherous general, a wealthy landowner and, as we will see shortly, an imperial eunuch and an arch-heretic. In these curses, ascetic power violently trumps other opposing embodiments of power.

The Death Curse: The Zenith of Ascetic Dominance and Radical Anti-Asceticism

The most potent affirmation of the hegemony of ascetic power is found in the death curse. There are two main narratives in *Historia religiosa* where persons are put to death after opposing a monk or a group to which the

[70] Foucault, *Punitive Society*, 8–10. [71] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 14.4 (*SC* 257, p. 14).

monk belongs or that he represents. The first is the famous tale of the death of Arius.[72] We should understand here that the death of Arius became an important legend in Nicene tradition, practically part of the foundational-mythological framework of Nicene Christianity. The legend of Arius' death is placed in the very first *vita* of *Historia religiosa.* Broadly speaking, Theodoret follows most of the conventional descriptions of Arius' death from earlier accounts, especially that Arius died suddenly of serious gastrointestinal problems.[73] But what is important about the Theodoretian account is that the Nicene legend of Arius' death is now explicitly linked with the activities of the Syrian monks, and specifically in the *vita* of James of Nisibis. For Theodoret, this link with Arius' death would be just as important as linking the monks with the histories of Moses, Elijah, Elisha and the apostles. James plays a crucial and active role in the downfall of Arius.

As the story goes, James travelled to Nicaea to attend the council and 'to fight for the true doctrines like some hero and champion of the whole host, since Nisibis was then under the sovereignty of Rome'.[74] The military rhetoric is once again apparent. After Arius was excommunicated, Theodoret tells us, seven of Arius' sympathisers begged Alexander of Alexandria to have pity on him. James recommended fasting for seven days and imploring God for an outcome.[75] After seven days, on the day the council had to reconvene, Arius died in a toilet when 'evacuating the refuse from his gluttony, he evacuated its receptacle [bowels] as well . . . his inwards dissolved and ejected along with his excrement'.[76]

What should we make of Theodoret's account of this horrifying myth, and specifically the activity of James of Nisibis? Theodoret believes that Arius was actually 'slain by the tongue' of the Syrian monk James. While Old Testament heroes like Phinehas, Theodoret explains, used weapons to slay the impious, 'the tongue sufficed for James in place of sword and spear when he destroyed the impious man to prevent him beholding the glory of God'.[77] The invocation of the story of Phinehas again embeds the saga in the whole salvation history of the (Nicene) Church.[78] Phinehas is known

[72] On the last days and death of Arius, see especially R. Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London, 2001) 65–81; T. Barnes, 'The Exile and Recalls of Arius', *JTS* 60 (2009) 109–29; E. Muehlberger, 'The Legend of Arius' Death: Imagination, Space and Filth in Late Ancient Historiography', *P&P* 227 (2015) 3–29.

[73] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 1.10 (*SC* 234, pp. 176–82); for a comparison of other accounts such as those in the ecclesiastical histories of Socrates and Sozomen, see Muehlberger, 'Arius' Death', 3–10.

[74] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 1.10 (*SC* 234, p. 178). [75] Ibid., 1.10 (*SC* 234, p. 180).

[76] Ibid., 1.10 (*SC* 234, p. 182). [77] Ibid.

[78] Cf. the remarks by Kippenberg, this volume, pp. 29–35, on the Phinehas story as a model for action during the Maccabaean revolt and in later times.

for thrusting a spear through an Israelite man and a Midianite woman, who were in a relationship considered to be defiling and idolatrous. The Midianite woman is specifically speared in her stomach (or possibly womb or vagina), according to Numbers 25:8. Arius is here likened to a foreign and impure Midianite woman of the Hebrew Bible, an idolatress, who was part of the reason why a plague was upon Israel.

The sin that causes the death of Arius, according to Theodoret, is eating – or more specifically, gluttony. Gluttony held an important place in the early Christian hamartiological imagination. Gluttony was often seen as the primordial sin of Adam and Eve.[79] John Chrysostom states that God's first commandment to Adam and Eve was to fast from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:7).[80] In contrast to the super-fasting monks of *Historia religiosa*, Theodoret places Arius within the long history of people eating when they should not. James was known for his fasting.[81] The heresiarch Arius responds to James' call for fasting with what Theodoret considers idolatrous gluttony, and his punishment is, again, fitting. Arius loses a vital organ. We are reminded once more of Maximus of Tyre, who stated that the fitting punishment for the glutton is the removal of the stomach.[82]

Both Blake Leyerle and Ellen Muehlberger have shown how the discourse of filth and excrement functioned, culturally and socially, as an identity marker for heresy.[83] Heretical excrement and filth, here, function as antitheses to the purificatory subset of asceticism. Fasting would have (technically) saved and purified Arius. But when Arius' bowels are excreted, it functions symbolically to illustrate the filth of his psychic disposition, which is now washed away with the excrement of the real world.

In Theodoret's account, Arius is slain by ascetic power, by the sharp tongue of James of Nisibis. Consequently, Theodoret also affirms the orthodox geography of Nisibis in his account. Muehlberger rightly notes that by locating the death of Arius in Constantinople, the city became memorialised, at least in the writings of some early Christian historians, as a stronghold of Nicene Christianity (despite its somewhat chequered past,

[79] Shaw, *Burden of the Flesh*, 129–60.
[80] John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Genesim* 1.6 (*PG* 53, col. 23.31–39).
[81] See e.g. Ephrem, *Carmina Nisibena* 14 (*CSCO* 218, pp. 37–40), as mentioned by Price, *History of the Monks of Syria*, 21 (n. 1).
[82] N. 32 above.
[83] B. Leyerle, 'Refuse, Filth, and Excrement in the Homilies of John Chrysostom', *JLA* 2 (2009) 337–56; Muehlberger, 'Arius' Death'.

in this regard).[84] Theodoret does something similar for the Syrian landscape, and Nisibis in particular. We should remember that Nisibis, at this stage, was under Sasanian rule. While Arius died in Constantinople, it was the Syrian monk James – the spear of Nisibis! – who killed Arius.

The second death curse takes place in the *vita* of Aphrahat. Theodoret tells of one of the Emperor Valens' eunuchs.[85] The eunuch was apparently one of the wicked supporters of the emperor who pressed that Aphrahat be exiled. What was the penalty for his insolence? The eunuch had to check whether the emperor's bath was ready. But the water was unmixed and piping hot, and the eunuch, without thinking, jumped into the water and slowly boiled to death.[86]

As with the Persian girls cursed with the grey hair, ancient medical knowledge of the elements and the temperaments may also assist us in making sense of the eunuch who boils to death. In early Christian thought, eunuchs were not seen as sexually neutral or frigid persons. Rather, it was believed that the eunuch body burnt with desire, while at the same time being wetter and softer than that of a man.[87] And as the anti-ascetic act of gluttony killed Arius, so is the eunuch brought to an end through bathing. Monks generally avoided bathing because of the apparent moistening effect it had on the body (and the fact that it was seen as vain luxury, not to mention the problem of public nudity). Thus, when the eunuch boils to death in hot water, the symbolism that Theodoret aims to convey is very clear – the eunuch is violently killed by the elements that characterised the eunuch body, namely heat and moisture, and by an act, namely bathing, that is inherently anti-ascetic.

In the event of the death curse, we find the climax of ascetic dominance. We should remember again, in this instance, that one of the main goals of asceticism is indeed the mortification, the death, of the body. This goal of asceticism is achieved. The death curse represents the ultimate coercive colonisation of the entire body by the power of God mediated through the monk. The bodies of Arius and the eunuch no longer pose a danger as weapons of demonic forces.

But this climax of ascetic dominance in the death curse signifies, at the same time, also a failure of asceticism. While the bodies are colonised, the souls of these individuals are lost. The representation of the death curse

[84] Muehlberger, 'Arius' Death', 15–22.
[85] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 8.9 (*SC* 234, pp. 392–94).
[86] Ibid., 8.10 (*SC* 234, pp. 394–96).
[87] E.g. Basil of Ancyra, *De virginitate* 61 (*PG* 30, cols. 793–96); see Rousselle, *Porneia*, 123; De Wet, *Preaching Bondage*, 256–67.

therefore acts as an antithesis to the radical ascetic practices of the monks of *Historia religiosa*. What happens to Arius and the eunuch is in essence the inverse of asceticism – it is radical anti-asceticism. But the demonstration of ascetic power through its inversion again serves in the interests of hegemonic ascetic discourse and power. Hayden White calls this the interaction of antitheses, and notes that 'one way of establishing the "meaning" of [one's] own life was to deny meaning to anything radically different from it, except as antitype or negative instance'.[88] The only thing that could have saved Arius and the eunuch was the self-control and restraint of asceticism.

In these narratives, the punitive dimension of asceticism receives prominence above all else. Foucault calls death 'the perfect and unsurpassable form of confinement ... it is definitive closure, absolute security'.[89] Individuals like Arius pose such a threat that the only safe means of memorialising their heretical infamy is through their shameful deaths. They require the ultimate confinement, namely death. But the act of radical anti-asceticism is equally as didactic, demonstrative and performative as radical asceticism. The lesson, however, is directed not to the recipient of the curse, but to those associated with the accursed. Although asceticism has failed on Arius and the eunuch, through their deaths the accursed become demonstrative ascetic apparatuses of fear, not unlike the wheel-cage of Thalelaeus[90] or the collar and irons of Eusebius of Teleda.[91] The death of Arius acts as a warning to Arians, and heretics more generally, while the death of the eunuch had to strike terror into the heart of Emperor Valens. The deaths of both Arius and the eunuch are related to heresy and the opposition of asceticism. The eunuch was basically the hand of the Emperor Valens, a known persecutor of Nicenes, and ascetics in particular. As Noel Lenski has shown, Valens was a staunch opponent of ascetics since 365, and may have even issued a law that forced all ascetics into imperial service.[92] Although the eunuch is not marked in his death, through his death it seems that Valens is marked since he is powerless, according to Theodoret, to exile Aphrahat. The filthy death of Arius could be understood as a mark against all Arians.

Finally, it is telling that the death curse is never directly pronounced over any of the individuals, despite the fact that their downfall seems

[88] H. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1985) 151.
[89] Foucault, *Punitive Society*, 11. [90] Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 28.3 (*SC* 257, pp. 226–28).
[91] See above p. 330.
[92] N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century AD* (Berkeley, 2002) 256.

inevitable. Technically, Arius and the eunuch have a choice, although the narrative structures it as an impossible choice. If they exercised self-control, they might be spared. Arius and the eunuch become their own executioners, and God is the one who directly exacts punishment. In a different instance, Symeon the Stylite only prophesies the death of one of Theodoret's opponents. The same goes for Julian of Saba's prayer for the downfall of the Emperor Julian. The monks are never directly involved in the act that brings death to their enemy. While the horrific deaths of Arius and the eunuch affirm the potency of ascetic power, the monk is not enveloped in the spectacle, and cannot be blamed for their deaths. The monk is not apportioned the shame of the executioner.[93]

Conclusion

What remains to be investigated in more detail is to what extent hagiographies like Theodoret's *Historia religiosa* shaped and reproduced practices of ascetic self-violence and violence against others in the possible communities of the audience(s). Although it has been noted that imitation was not a primary purpose of the *Historia religiosa*, we should not assume that some did not attempt to imitate the punitive ascetic principles of the monks. If ascetic discourse and practice was beginning to be understood in terms of security and territory, the likelihood of a proliferation of what we may call coercive ascetic practices is quite possible. This could especially have taken place in the household in various forms of domestic religious violence. Let us take the example of Christian slaveholding. Even long before Theodoret wrote *Historia religiosa*, John Chrysostom approved the use of coercive ascetic violence in the disciplining of slaves:

> Just as when a noble and free man has an incontinent slave woman, who lures in all the bystanders for licentious purposes, he does not allow her to go out into the street, or to be seen in the alley, or to burst into the marketplace; rather, he confines her to the house, and binding her with fetters, he commands her to stay inside permanently, so that the restriction of the place and the constraint of the chains will be her starting point for modesty.[94]

[93] On the issue of punishment and the shame of the executioner, see M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1977) 9–10.

[94] See e.g. John Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos* 2.123vb–124ra, the text of which can be found in W. Pradels, R. Brändle and M. Heimgartner, 'Das bisher vermisste Textstück in Johannes Chrysostomus, Adversus Judaeos, Oratio 2', *ZAC* 5 (2001) 23–49 at 36; our translation is based on theirs (at p. 37). See also De Wet, *Preaching Bondage*, 191–92.

Like the monks that Chrysostom may have seen when growing up in Antioch, this slave girl is also confined in a small space. She also wears irons and fetters. And like the cursing of the Persian girls or the licentious general in *Historia religiosa*, these techniques also teach the slave girl modesty, or σωφροσύνη. The spread of a 'domestic' brand of monasticism, or monastic households, may have been accompanied by a domestic religious violence that was supported by hagiographic accounts like the *Historia religiosa*, which sanctions not only ascetic self-violence, but also the violent asceticisation of the other.

CHAPTER 15

*Suffering Saints: Shaping Narratives of Violence after Chalcedon**

Christine Shepardson

Introduction

Most Christians in Late Antiquity understood imperially sanctioned violence against the earliest Christians as the unjustified persecution of martyrs by an empire that was at odds with God.[1] Nevertheless, Christians in positions of power after the rise of the Emperor Constantine (306–37) often explained imperially sanctioned violence against their religious opponents as the justified suppression of heresy, a narrative that complicated the position of Christians who rejected imperial orthodoxy, such as those who denounced the legitimacy of the Council of Chalcedon after 451.

One consequence of this post-Constantinian challenge is that narratives of violence pervade the fifth- and sixth-century anti-Chalcedonian writings of John Rufus, Zachariah of Mytilene, Philoxenus of Mabbug, Severus of Antioch and John of Ephesus, as these authors depict their heroes as the most recent martyrs in a long line of suffering saints who persevered in Christian truth in the face of unjust imperial persecution. The fact, though, that these authors retained a narrative of their community as God's suffering saints even when they had imperial support under the Emperor Anastasius (491–518) – highlighting in those years their heroes' self-imposed struggles from ascetic hardships more than physical injuries from imperial violence – demonstrates that their stories of suffering were carefully crafted for rhetorical effect in each new context. Faced with a variety of threats to their followers' allegiance over the decades, ranging

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[1] For the image of the early martyr as the target of state-inflicted violence, see Digeser, this volume, p. 229. L. Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (London, 2004), esp. p. 144, has demonstrated some of the ways in which the stories of the earliest martyrs actually gained greater currency as Christians expanded and codified a narrative of widespread suffering retroactively in the fourth and fifth centuries.

from bloody physical violence to the attractive temptations of bribery, these fifth- and sixth-century leaders persistently represented anti-Chalcedonian Christians as suffering saints in the lineage of the early martyrs in the hope of defending their doctrinal legitimacy regardless of who currently held sway in the imperial capital, and of thus reducing the rate of apostasy from their churches.[2]

Victims of Violence: Early Anti-Chalcedonian Narratives of Imperial Persecution

Who considers what behaviour to be violent, and what violence to be persecutory or justified, depends significantly on individuals' political and doctrinal commitments, associations that were extremely unstable in the fifth- and sixth-century Roman empire.[3] Beyond the anti-Chalcedonian Christians who accepted the Council of Ephesus (431) and rejected the Council of Chalcedon (451), and the Chalcedonian Christians who accepted the legitimacy of both, later efforts at compromise like the Emperor Zeno's *Henotikon* (482) produced further doctrinal variations that increasingly fractured the empire's Christian communities. Furthermore, the fact that imperial support vacillated among various doctrinal positions over time meant that at different moments different leaders had the power to exile their opponents and establish their own bishops – if often only temporarily – in the empire's church buildings and liturgies.[4] In the midst of such upheavals, it is little surprise that Christians looked to both imperial decisions and local leaders for guidance on the definition of

[2] On violent rhetoric in terms of identity production, see Mayer, this volume, p. 263. For the distinction between discursive (cultural) and physical violence, see the General Introduction, p. 3, Bremmer, p. 48, and Bendlin, pp. 144–45, all this volume.

[3] See Chapter 11 by Van Nuffelen, this volume, which shows that what some understood as the justified healing of heretics, in this case the Donatists, others interpreted as unjustifiable harm. Cf. for what follows the similar overview by Elton, this volume, pp. 367–69.

[4] While this chapter focuses on some authors who rejected Chalcedon, the shifting imperial allegiances of the late fifth and early sixth century meant that Church leaders who supported Chalcedon also sometimes found themselves out of favour, and the rhetoric of suffering, violence and martyrdom in their texts would make a worthwhile complementary study. In his examination of the use of the military in episcopal and doctrinal conflicts, for example, G. Greatrex, 'Moines, militaires et défense de la frontière orientale au VI^{e} s.', in A. Lewin and P. Pellegrini (eds.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest* (Oxford, 2007) 285–97, reveals that no community was immune from such violence in these conflicts. J. H. F. Dijkstra and G. Greatrex, in 'Patriarchs and Politics in Constantinople in the Reign of Anastasius (with a Reedition of *O.Mon.Ephiph.* 59)', *Millennium* 6 (2009) 223–64, further touch on some of the complexity of these shifting allegiances, as well as some of the suffering of the Chalcedonian bishops.

Christian orthodoxy; nor is it surprising that many laypeople, monks and clergy alike changed their allegiances during the course of these conflicts. With the political strength of Chalcedonian Christianity again on the rise after the death of Anastasius in 518, numerous Christians turned towards pro-Chalcedonian leaders, and anti-Chalcedonian leaders responded to the increased threat of apostasy by representing the events around them as a continuation of a long history of widespread violent persecution against God's true Church in the hope that their followers would choose the path of the martyrs and privilege an eternal heavenly reward over immediate earthly comforts.[5]

In these conflicts, all sides agreed on the history of Christian orthodoxy up through the Council of Ephesus' anathematisation of the teachings of Nestorius in 431. In the decades that followed, though, leaders disagreed about the path that orthodoxy took in relation to the complex issues at stake in the Second Council of Ephesus in 449, the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo in 451, the anti-Chalcedonian *Encyclical* of the usurper Basiliscus in 475, its retraction in his *Anti-encyclical* that soon followed, and the *Henotikon* of the Emperor Zeno in 482 that attempted to bypass the debates over Chalcedon by offering a new measure of orthodoxy in its place. While many anti-Chalcedonian Christians enjoyed increased support in the reign of Anastasius,[6] Justin I (518–27) actively supported Chalcedon, and the Council's opponents perceived his reign as filled with more aggressive imperial policies against them.[7] Justin's successor, Justinian (527–65), and his wife Theodora (died 548) renewed efforts to find a compromise, but they were ultimately unsuccessful. Justinian's support for the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 was the last major imperial effort at compromise over Chalcedon, and Justin II

[5] As noted by J.-E. Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (Piscataway, NJ, 2002) xxxv: 'John Rufus' works uncovers [*sic*] a world vision' in which 'in the cosmological battle between good and evil the orthodox community is characterized as the last stronghold of truth in a world otherwise distorted by global apostasy'.

[6] On the complex politics of gaining and keeping authority in Constantinople in these years, and Anastasius' evolution with respect to Chalcedon, see Dijkstra and Greatrex, 'Patriarchs and Politics'.

[7] As observed by V. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (New York, 2008) 17: 'Although the non-Chalcedonian sources, especially the works of John of Ephesus . . . perceived the East as shattered by waves of violent persecutions, it seems that Justin I was as careful as his predecessors to find a balance between enforcing religious conformity and submitting to the reality of the religious landscape in the eastern provinces'. Nevertheless, Justin did actively support Chalcedon, unlike his predecessor, and that did sometimes have visceral negative consequences for those who opposed the Council, including in his episcopal appointments and exiles, and in occasional acts of physical violence. Jacob of Edessa and Michael the Syrian both attest to a law that Justin I issued requiring all soldiers to accept Chalcedonian Christianity; see A. D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity: A Social History* (Malden, MA, 2007) 190. See also Greatrex, 'Moines', 294.

(565–74) became increasingly hostile to those who rejected any imperially sanctioned councils.

By the early sixth century, a number of anti-Chalcedonian leaders produced powerful written defences of their controversial doctrines and claims to authority, among them many who would later be seen as formative leaders in the development of Syrian orthodoxy. Philoxenus, for example, sometimes wrote from Mabbug (Manbij, Syria), where he was appointed bishop in 485, and other times from exile, such as when he was expelled at the end of his life from 519 to 523.[8] Philoxenus' friend and junior colleague Severus of Antioch also sometimes wrote from a position of power as the bishop of Antioch, where he resided from 512 to 518, and sometimes from the subsequent exile he faced until his death in 538.[9] John Rufus, on the other hand, wrote from the monastery of Peter the Iberian near Gaza during the reign of Anastasius,[10] but because he lived in Palestine, he found himself still threatened by a powerful Chalcedonian bishop and regional majority.[11] Zachariah was from the region of Gaza, but wrote from the imperial capital of Constantinople. Although he ended his life as a bishop who at least nominally accepted the Council of Chalcedon, he earlier opposed its doctrine, and his *Church History* of the years 451–91 from *c.* 500, and several *Lives* from the first half of the sixth century, such as the one about his friend Severus of Antioch, hail the usual canon of anti-Chalcedonian heroes.[12] Decades later, John of Ephesus wrote a lengthy *Lives of the Eastern Saints* from Constantinople in the early years of Justin II's reign, and a *Church History*, the first two parts of which circulated under Justin II between 565 and 571, and the third part

[8] For a recent study of Philoxenus, see D. Michelson, *The Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug* (Oxford, 2014). See also the introduction in R. Kitchen, *The Discourses of Philoxenos of Mabbug: a New Translation and Introduction* (Collegeville, MN, 2013) xiii–lxxix.

[9] For a recent study that affirms the complexity of Severus' doctrinal positions among the constellation of possibilities during his episcopacy, and the role that he himself came to play as a touchstone in these discussions, see Y. Moss, *Incorruptible Bodies: Christology, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2016).

[10] Scholars usually date John's *Plerophoriae* during Severus' time as bishop in Antioch, and his *Life of Peter the Iberian* not long after Peter the Iberian's death in 491. See e.g. C. Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian* (New York, 2006) 12–21; C. Horn and R. Phenix, *John Rufus: The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus* (Atlanta, 2008) lxiii. These books provide an excellent introduction to John Rufus, his works and his context. See also Steppa, *John Rufus*.

[11] The aggressive pro-Chalcedonian Elias I, bishop of Jerusalem in 494–516, is particularly relevant.

[12] For an introduction to this text's complex history and a translation of the four books (3–6) of Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene's *Chronicle* that rely on and are our main source for Zachariah's *Church History*, see G. Greatrex, with R. Phenix and C. Horn, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool, 2011).

of which he wrote during the embattled remaining years of his life.[13] In such regionally and chronologically diverse contexts, these authors constructed narratives that described the decades after Chalcedon as filled with pervasive violent persecution against anti-Chalcedonian Christians. As Elizabeth Castelli has argued, 'the memory work done by early Christians on the historical experience of persecution and martyrdom was a form of culture making, whereby Christian identity was indelibly marked by the collective memory of the religious suffering of others', and in many ways these fifth- and sixth-century texts did the same for anti-Chalcedonian Christianity.[14]

Zachariah's representation of the persecution that anti-Chalcedonian Christians faced in the first four decades after the Council is particularly notable for his emphasis on the role of imperial troops, a focus that reinforces a comparison with early Christian martyrs and highlights the egregious and deadly nature of the physical violence that some Christians who rejected Chalcedon suffered.[15] As Geoffrey Greatrex has noted about the sixth century, the army was often used 'as the strong arm of the imperial persecutors'.[16] Given that Jerusalem was the focus of some of the earliest conflicts in the days after the Council of Chalcedon, it is not surprising that Zachariah frequently mentions the controversial Bishop Juvenal and the physical violence that took place in that city under his watch, particularly against his temporary anti-Chalcedonian replacement, Theodosius. Zachariah notes that in 452, after unexpectedly supporting Chalcedon, Juvenal was returning to Jerusalem with an army in order

[13] On John of Ephesus, see S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley, 1990), and J. J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus: A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Groningen, 1995).

[14] E. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York, 2004) 4.

[15] Greatrex, 'Moines', adeptly demonstrates that the use of the military in the controversies around Chalcedon was not unusual, whether to enforce episcopal exiles or forcibly encourage the acceptance of imperial orthodoxy, and his observation that Anastasius and Justin I both deployed the military against certain Christians reveals that this type of violence was not restricted to one side of the controversies. At p. 292, Greatrex also notes that Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 10.23 (vol. 4, p. 386 Chabot), later exploited the Chalcedonian use of the military to draw a direct comparison between the early Christian martyrs under Domitian and the later anti-Chalcedonian victims of imperial persecution. Some of Anastasius' forceful tactics are also visible in Dijkstra and Greatrex, 'Patriarchs and Politics'; on the other hand, the brutal and bloody violence of the slaves allegedly hired by the pro-Chalcedonian Bishop Macedonius to attack those in Constantinople in 511 who rejected Chalcedon is detailed in the first of the two letters of Severus translated in the same study (Dijkstra and Greatrex, 'Patriarchs and Politics', 241–43).

[16] Greatrex, 'Moines', 285. At pp. 291, 295, Greatrex further shows that while all sides sometimes deployed the military to enforce ecclesiastical decisions, during the sixth century the authority for these actions shifted from the emperor to local bishops or generals.

'to arrest Theodosius, imprison him, depose any bishop whom he had consecrated by his authority, and punish the monks and the people and persecute them for their insolence and audacity because they had made Theodosius bishop' after what they viewed as Juvenal's betrayal.[17] When the monks at Neapolis refused Juvenal's efforts to entice them to his side, he 'gave orders to the soldiers and the Samaritans, who beat and killed the monks', so that at Juvenal's orders these soldiers 'killed many monks, whose blood was shed upon the ground'.[18] Zachariah says of Juvenal that 'through the cooperation of the Roman armed forces [he] was pursuing the faithful and the monks throughout the countryside'.[19] Zachariah claims that Bishop Theodosius was himself a victim of physical imperial violence as he 'was being sought by the Roman army' on orders from the emperor, and 'was arrested and imprisoned in a room containing lime, [where] he finally died'.[20] Zachariah thus highlights the physical violence that anti-Chalcedonian Christians faced as well as the role of imperial soldiers in those skirmishes, all of which helped to connect these remembrances of recent martyrs with the familiar stories of early Christian martyrs whose heroic deaths were commemorated annually among Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian Christians alike through liturgical celebrations.

Besides Jerusalem, Alexandria was also the site of a great deal of conflict and physical violence, including by imperial troops, during the years after the Council of Chalcedon. Zachariah reports that under the Emperor Marcian (450–57) the Chalcedonian Bishop Proterius 'afflicted and abused many who were unwilling so that they would agree with him. He sent [many] into exile, and seized their property through the governors who were obedient to him by order of the Emperor'.[21] Proterius further 'became anxious', bribed Roman soldiers and 'filled their hands with the blood of the faithful who were killed' when he 'made a war in which many died, [including] those who had fled and taken refuge at the altar and in the baptistery'.[22] In fact, Zachariah claims that Proterius 'was plundering and persecuting' the whole city of Alexandria 'to make them agree with the council and accept the Tome [of Leo]'.[23] When the general Dionysius learned that the anti-Chalcedonian Christians had elected Timothy Aelurus as a competing bishop for Proterius' see, he 'led the entire Roman

[17] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.5a (*CSCO* 83, p. 159). All translations of Zachariah are taken from Greatrex, with Phenix and Horn, *Chronicle*.
[18] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.5b (*CSCO* 83, pp. 159–60).
[19] Ibid., 3.8a (*CSCO* 83, p. 161).
[20] Ibid., 3.9a (*CSCO* 83, p. 161).
[21] Ibid., 3.2a (*CSCO* 83, p. 155).
[22] Ibid., 3.2b (*CSCO* 83, p. 155).
[23] Ibid., 3.10a (*CSCO* 83, p. 163).

army and seized Timothy and many were killed'.[24] Through these stories, Zachariah highlights the overbearing violence that anti-Chalcedonian Christians suffered at the hands of imperial forces.

Like Zachariah, John Rufus also set the stage for understanding early sixth-century events as persecutory by emphasising fifth-century physical violence that took place in Alexandria against the anti-Chalcedonian episcopal heroes Dioscorus and Timothy Aelurus. He defines Marcian as 'that chief, cause, and director of such evils' against the rioting Alexandrians, 'those believing people who already had fallen into despair from the many calamities and persecutions that had come upon them',[25] but he more immediately blames Proterius and the 'barbarian soldiers' whom he deployed:

> Proterius ... exhibited evil and harsh treatment to those laypeople and monks who were not willing to be in communion with him. He bought the magistrates and through them brought all kinds of insults and intolerable sorrows upon the orthodox, bringing into the city multitudes of wild barbarian soldiers. He inflicted without pity unrepeatable evils, both full of a myriad of lamentations and against the laws of nature, until he extended his madness even to the holy virgins.[26]

According to John, survivors of the event reported to Peter the Iberian who was in exile about 'those who had died in violence in this destruction and distress'.[27] John notes that Timothy Aelurus was himself then forced into exile,[28] and was the victim of numerous persecutions.[29] John leaves no doubt for his early sixth-century audience that earlier generations of faithful anti-Chalcedonian saints had suffered violent persecution like the early Christian martyrs before them.

In addition to the Christians in Alexandria, John Rufus also highlights the suffering of numerous other ascetics and bishops in active persecution on account of their rejection of Chalcedon. John refers to 'the times of persecution', such as when he discusses that Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch were 'being persecuted for orthodoxy' during 'the Chalcedonian rebellion'.[30] In both his *Life of Peter* and *Life of Theodosius*, John

[24] Ibid., 4.1b (*CSCO* 83, p. 170).
[25] John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian* 91 (p. 134 Horn and Phenix). All translations of John Rufus are found on the pages facing the Syriac text in Horn and Phenix, *John Rufus*.
[26] John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian* 90 (p. 132 Horn and Phenix), cf. ibid., 83 (p. 124 Horn and Phenix).
[27] Ibid., 84 (p. 126 Horn and Phenix), cf. ibid., 92 (p. 140 Horn and Phenix).
[28] Ibid., 97 (p. 144 Horn and Phenix).
[29] Ibid., 110 (p. 164 Horn and Phenix).
[30] Ibid., 91 (p. 138 Horn and Phenix), cf. ibid., 62 (p. 90 Horn and Phenix).

specifically represents Bishop Theodosius of Jerusalem as subject to persecutions. Theodosius was, according to John, initially brought before Marcian, who 'was first of all anxious to weaken his zeal through allurements and to persuade him to adhere to the wicked council of Chalcedon, promising Theodosius his friendship, favor, and many benefits'. When Marcian saw that Theodosius 'was prepared for every hardship and endurance', however, he handed him over to 'a combatant on account of the Council of Chalcedon' who promised to make Theodosius concede, 'through torture' if need be, although in the end neither 'luxury' nor abuse could persuade Theodosius, who held out 'like a martyr (*sāhdāit*)'.[31] John's narrative taught his sixth-century audience that anti-Chalcedonian Christians had formerly found themselves, and might well still become, the victims of vicious and unjust violent persecution on account of their rejection of the Council of Chalcedon.

Not surprisingly, John's colleague Philoxenus echoed this rhetoric of violent persecution, most often when he was suffering personally from the loss of imperial support. In the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* that he wrote from exile under Justin I, for example, Philoxenus refers to 'all the tribulations [coming] from the persecutors',[32] and in an earlier letter to the monks of Beth Gaugal he represents the conflict between anti-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian Christians as 'the struggle (*agunā*, Greek ἀγών) against Christ'.[33] His second letter to this same community likewise says of his opponents, 'they hate, envy, persecute, and revile the one who they learn confesses Christ as God. And in this they show that if they were able, they would also kill'.[34] In a letter to monks in Palestine, Philoxenus explains that his opponent, Flavian II of Antioch (498–512), had become angered and as a result 'in a time of peace he resurrected a persecution'.[35] Even earlier, in the early 480s, Philoxenus praised a monastic audience for their steadfastness, asking: 'Who has not been amazed and marveled at the

[31] John Rufus, *Life of Theodosius* 5 (pp. 288–90 Horn and Phenix).

[32] Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (*CSCO* 231, p. 77). All translations of this text are based on the French translation in *CSCO* 232, unless otherwise indicated.

[33] Philoxenus, *First Letter to the Monks of Beth Gaugal* (p. 158 Vaschalde). All translations of this text are taken from A. Vaschalde, *Three Letters of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbôgh (485–519)* (Rome, 1902) 105–18, with modifications.

[34] Philoxenus, *Second Letter to the Monks of Beth Gaugal* 61 (p. 78 De Halleux); translation based on the one in French by A. de Halleux, 'La deuxième lettre de Philoxène aux monastères du Beit Gaugal', *Muséon* 96 (1983) 5–79 at 78 (beneath the Syriac text).

[35] Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Palestine on Faith* 1 (p. 24 De Halleux); translation based on the one in French by A. de Halleux, 'Nouveaux textes inédits de Philoxène de Mabbog: I. Lettre aux moines de Palestine – Lettre liminaire au *Synodicon* d'Ephèse', *Muséon* 75 (1962) 31–62 at 41.

severity of your tribulations?'[36] Such rhetoric clearly positioned Philoxenus and his colleagues in a persistently dangerous context that threatened their very lives.

Multiple times in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* Philoxenus compares himself to early Christian saints on account of his own sufferings and exile,[37] and he asks his audience to pray that he will be found worthy of his suffering, whether 'it be by the sword', or 'in difficult chronic pains', or 'the sufferings that come from exile'.[38] The trials of exile were not abstract for Philoxenus in his last years, and he laments 'the severity of these pains by which I am being violently beaten'.[39] He enumerates these sufferings in great detail, giving a strong picture of the physical persecution that he was enduring on account of his commitment to a Christian orthodoxy that rejected the legitimacy of Chalcedon.[40] Philoxenus also claims that he had earlier barely escaped death many times when he acted against his opponents' wishes in the region of Cyrrhus and in Mabbug,[41] and he writes that he likewise received hostile treatment in numerous other cities, as he assured his audience they would, too, if they were to imitate his zeal and actions.[42] In fact, Philoxenus recounts the stories of others who had similarly suffered in what he claims were recent persecutions, praising 'the faithful everywhere' whom he says had risen up since his exile.[43] He describes Christians ready to accept martyrdom in Antioch, as well as many monks in the Antiochene countryside who 'were killed, and others, having received many wounds, in leaving with all their bruised and injured limbs, were preserved from their death through the help of the Lord, and also carry the signs of the sufferings of Christ on their bodies', such that there were many 'confessors' and even 'martyrs (*sāhde*)' for the Church in this time in Antioch and Edessa.[44] Through such passages Philoxenus represents himself as part of a community that continued to be persecuted and suffered physical violence on behalf of God's truth, just as many orthodox saints before them had likewise unjustly suffered.

Like his colleagues, Severus of Antioch similarly connected early sixth-century events with the martyrdoms of early Christian history through the vocabulary of persecution and suffering. He commemorates persecutions of the early Christian martyrs as well as of the fourth- and fifth-century

[36] Philoxenus, *First Letter to the Monks of Beth Gaugal* (p. 147 Vaschalde).
[37] E.g. Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (*CSCO* 231, pp. 69, 79).
[38] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, pp. 79–80). [39] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, p. 80).
[40] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, pp. 93–94). [41] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, p. 94). [42] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, p. 95).
[43] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, p. 80). [44] Ibid. (*CSCO* 231, pp. 80–81).

Alexandrian Bishops Athanasius, Cyril and Timothy Aelurus.[45] In his own time, Severus refers to 'a grievous persecution and expulsion of the orthodox in Isauria',[46] persecuted bishops 'who have been banished from other countries and bear upon them marks for Christ's sake', and 'the immobility and steadfastness of the holy persecuted churches in the East and those in Egypt, which are already preparing to suffer the same things'.[47] These references paint a picture of wide-ranging hardships faced by Christians who rejected Chalcedon. In some of his correspondence, Severus also mentions his own persecution on account of his rejection of the Council. For example, during the time of his exile, or the 'time of persecution', he describes the *agune* (ἀγῶνες) that he was undergoing 'on behalf of the orthodox faith', mentions that he is in hiding 'on account of the present stress', and refers to his exile 'and the persecution by which we are persecuted for the sake of the orthodox faith'.[48]

As Castelli observes about earlier Christian martyrdom narratives,

> Martyrdom is not simply an action. Martyrdom requires audience (whether real or fictive), retelling, interpretation, and world- and meaning-making activities. Suffering violence in and of itself is not enough. In order for martyrdom to emerge, both the violence and its suffering must be infused with particular meanings.[49]

Severus and the other anti-Chalcedonian writers from this period thus shaped their narrative of persecutory violence in order to highlight and give meaning to this violence in ways that benefited their doctrinal community by associating anti-Chalcedonian Christians who suffered under Chalcedonian Christian leaders with the much-lauded martyr-saints of earlier Christian history.[50]

[45] Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae selectae* 6.1.1 (vol. 1, pp. 3–12 Brooks).

[46] Ibid., 6.1.52 (vol. 1, p. 166 Brooks). The translations from this collection of Severus' epistles come from E. W. Brooks, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1903–1904).

[47] Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae selectae* 6.1.55 (vol. 1, p. 183 Brooks).

[48] Ibid., 6.1.53 (vol. 1, p. 170 Brooks), 6.1.29 (vol. 1, p. 102 Brooks), 6.1.55 (vol. 1, p. 181 Brooks), 6.2.3 (vol. 1, p. 256 Brooks). Cf. Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae* 46 (*PO* 12, pp. 316–21).

[49] Castelli, *Martyrdom*, 34. See also D. Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, 1999); L. S. Cobb, *Divine Deliverance: Pain and Painlessness in Early Christian Martyr Texts* (Berkeley, 2017) 122: 'Martyrs' bodies, particularly descriptions of their somatic experiences, are discursive tools employed in social, political, and theological contests'.

[50] Regarding the sixth century, see M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2005) 336: 'Late Roman Christianity fragmented into mutually antagonistic Chalcedonian and Monophysite Churches … These "imagined communities", which with the passage of time came to identify themselves in ethnic and

Witnesses for Christ: Expanding the Scope of Meaningful Suffering

While some fifth- and sixth-century Christians suffered physical violence and death for their rejection of Chalcedon, however, John Rufus, Philoxenus, Zachariah and Severus more often found themselves and their audiences facing less fatal consequences for their ecclesiastical allegiances, and sometimes they even had the support of the empire behind them. In such cases, these leaders often expanded their vocabulary of suffering, violence and martyrdom to include much more than a quick violent death on account of adhering to anti-Chalcedonian Christianity.[51] Philoxenus, for example, asks: 'Was there ever a teacher of divine knowledge who did not seal his faith in tribulations, persecutions, insults, abuses, slanders, injustices, severe sufferings and bitter deaths, and put to shame by his endurance those who were persecuting him?'[52] Such rhetoric offers a powerful example of how weaving together suffering from insults with martyrs' deaths from bitter torments expanded the scope of these narratives of violence.

Likewise, in their years of episcopal power, Philoxenus and Severus continued to argue that true Christians suffered, but in the absence of more visible signs of active physical persecution on account of their doctrinal commitments, they turned their rhetoric to individual struggles in ascetic contests and against heresy and sin. During his time in Mabbug, for example, Philoxenus equated the persecution and violence suffered by the early Christian martyrs with the voluntary ascetic '*agunā* against sin' in which his monastic audience was engaged.[53] His lengthy *Discourses* from this same period offer another prolonged example of his application of the

linguistic terms as well as religious, hardened their sense of identity and difference from one generation to the next by repeating stories of martyrdom and persecution'.

[51] D. Fruchtman, *Living in a Martyrial World: Living Martyrs and the Creation of Martyrial Consciousness in the Late Antique Latin West* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Bloomington, 2014) 3–7, reveals that it was not uncommon for early Christians to expand the vocabulary of martyrdom in contexts where violent physical persecution was unexpected, and she mentions such arguments in Clement, Origen, Cyprian, Tertullian and Commodian, as well as in more detail in the fourth- and fifth-century Latin authors Prudentius, Paulinus and Augustine, with an acknowledgement of many others outside the scope of her study, including Greek authors like Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom. See also D. Fruchtman, 'Modeling a Martyrial Worldview: Prudentius' Pedagogical *Ekphrasis* and Christianization', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7 (2014) 130–58.

[52] Philoxenus, *First Letter to the Monks of Beth Gaugal* (p. 160 Vaschalde).

[53] Philoxenus, *Letter to Patricius* 127 (*PO* 30, p. 868). All translations of this text are based on the French translation in *PO* 30, pp. 722–883 (on the pages facing the Syriac text).

rhetoric of struggle and suffering to a life of asceticism.[54] Severus similarly had a tendency while in residence as bishop in Antioch to recount martyr stories more often in order to teach his audience to live morally upright lives than to persevere through physical torture.[55]

Philoxenus is particularly clear in his numerous letters that there are many threats to his followers that go far beyond physically violent attacks that threaten their lives, including dangers from natural disasters, opponents' insults and financial penalties for refusing to accept imperial orthodoxy. In some cases, he even suggests that anti-Chalcedonian Christians relax their zeal for Christ for positive rewards such as flattery or the promise of gifts. As he says in his *Letter concerning Zeal*, a monk 'who because of a present relaxes from zeal is an associate of Judas the traitor. That one sold Christ for money and this one is selling him for handfuls of barley and crusts of bread'.[56] Philoxenus confirms that anti-Chalcedonian Christians are being courted by their doctrinal opponents with means as basic as food in his *First Letter to the Monks of Beth Gaugal*, written during his expulsion from Antioch in 482–84, in which he praises these monks for not giving in to such temptations. He writes:

> Neither the fear of others nor the flattery of the great has ruled over you. You have not exchanged the truth with earthly gifts and you have not ceased from the zeal of the faith because there were temporal favours ... You have not ransomed Christ with handfuls of barley and crusts of bread like the rest of the others.[57]

Bribing an ascetic with food in an effort to encourage adherence to Chalcedon is a significantly different strategy from the bloody physical attacks attributed to Marcian's troops, and Philoxenus is at pains to convey the severity of the newer type of danger to his audience.

In other cases, Philoxenus describes a fear of negative consequences rather than a hope of positive ones as the reason why some turn away from his teachings towards imperial orthodoxy. In his *Letter to the Monks on Faith*,

[54] This concept is pervasive in this series of discourses; see e.g. Philoxenus, *Discourses* 5.22 (vol. I, pp. 140–41 Budge), 11.5 (vol. I, pp. 422–23 Budge), 11.10 (vol. I, pp. 426–27 Budge). See also Chapter 14 by De Wet in this volume, which traces the ways in which asceticism both encourages and functions as violence.

[55] Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae ad Sergium Grammaticum* 1 (*CSCO* 119, p. 73). See also his *Homiliae cathedrales* 18 (*PO* 37, pp. 7–12), 41 (*PO* 36, p. 24), 75 (*PO* 12, p. 112), 78 (*PO* 20, pp. 278, 295), 97 (*PO* 25, pp. 121, 134–38), 100 (*PO* 22, pp. 242–48).

[56] Philoxenus, *Letter concerning Zeal* 1 (p. 53 Vööbus); trans. A. Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism* (Stockholm, 1960) 53 (beneath the Syriac text; slightly modified).

[57] Philoxenus, *First Letter to the Monks of Beth Gaugal* (pp. 147–48 Vaschalde).

Philoxenus exhorts his audience to proclaim their support 'in the public confession before the persecutors', and not to be silent from embarrassment or shame or because intimidated by 'the people who hold power'.[58] In his late fifth-century *Discourses*, Philoxenus reminds an ascetic audience, 'The disciple of the Lord' perseveres 'in the face of all tests of works and words, of afflictions and abuses, confinements and false accusations, injustices and prisons, the indignations of false witnesses and incriminations'.[59] Philoxenus also writes to the monks of Senun that the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs of the centuries that followed and the leading bishops who came after them, 'endured not only exile but also the seizure of goods and the expulsion from their positions and of their ranks, and even severe torments and bitter tribulations, the fire, the beasts and various deaths', all of them receiving all these sufferings 'with confession, joy and exultation, because they deserved to suffer with Christ and for him and because of him'.[60] Philoxenus conflates suffering from insults and false accusations with death from torments, fire and beasts, expanding the scope of what he recognises as violence and persecution against Christians who reject Chalcedon.

John Rufus similarly includes an expansive definition of violence against those who rejected Chalcedon by bringing together descriptions of Peter the Iberian's forced exile and an attempt on his life with the saint's ascetic struggles, praising Peter's behaviour 'in afflictions, in tortures, in sufferings, in persecutions, in labors, in fasts, in vigils, in struggles, in fights, in *agune* unto blood'.[61] John claims that at the end of Peter's life some of his followers were praying to 'the Lord' that Peter 'should be released and find rest from such asceticism and afflictions and persecutions, which [he endures] for the glory of your holy name'.[62] In these passages John draws no distinction between the suffering that Peter endured from episcopal or imperial conflicts and the suffering of his ascetic practice, seeing all of his endurance of earthly trials equally as manifestations of his saintly and orthodox devotion to God and, of great importance for his audience, equally deserving of heavenly rewards.[63]

[58] Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks on Faith* 3 (*PO* 41, pp. 38–40); translation based on the one in French in *PO* 41, pp. 1–143 (on the pages facing the Syriac text).
[59] Philoxenus, *Discourses* 5.22 (vol. 1, p. 141 Budge); trans. Kitchen, *Discourses*, 112.
[60] Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (*CSCO* 231, p. 69).
[61] John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian* 21 (p. 26 Horn and Phenix). See Hebrews 12:4 and 2 Corinthians 6:4–5.
[62] John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian* 173 (p. 254 Horn and Phenix).
[63] Horn, *Asceticism*, 260, has noted that John Rufus 'wove together the notions of "pilgrim" and "martyr" by linking pilgrimage to the veneration of the relics of martyrs', thus allowing his ascetic heroes to be seen as the new martyrs of their day. She also states that John represents the martyrs

Like John Rufus, Severus employs a wide range of meanings for terms such as *sāhdā* (Greek μάρτυς) and *agunā*, strengthening connections with earlier martyrs by expanding the possibility of which behaviours and people deserved Christians' respect and praise. In the homilies from his time in Antioch under the supportive Emperor Anastasius, Severus often reminds his audience of the tortures that earlier Christian martyrs faced from persecution.[64] Nevertheless, these homilies often encourage his audience to imitate the martyrs' fatal acts of witnessing through their own acts of witnessing to Christ by fasting and prayer. Severus' wide-ranging use of *sāhdā* allows him to apply the term to people who had not died a traditional martyr's death, including the anti-Chalcedonian heroes Dioscorus, 'the bishop and holy *sāhdā*',[65] and Timothy Aelurus, who 'completed a long residence in exile after the manner of a martyr (*sāhdāit*)'.[66] In fact, Dioscorus and Timothy were also such pivotal figures in Zachariah's *Church History* that he too refers to them as 'the true *sāhde* of Christ', even though neither died a sudden martyr's death because of their Christian commitments.[67] The flexibility of the vocabulary opens the way for these authors to apply the term to themselves as well as their audience, such as when Severus writes about the 'martyr-like contests (*agune sāhdāyā*)' that anti-Chalcedonian Christians were undergoing.[68]

In his *Letter to Patricius*, Philoxenus draws a detailed history of the physical torture of the early apostles and other martyrs, traces this line of torture up through the martyrs of the next generations and connects post-Constantinian saints with these earlier martyrs on account of their exiles and other less fatal tribulations. After listing the violent physical tortures that the apostles suffered, Philoxenus mentions that Ignatius was 'devoured by beasts' and traces this line of physical torture up through the martyrs of the future generations, saying: 'And the holy *sāhde* left their lives through the persecutions aroused in all times, through the various distinctions of

whose relics Peter the Iberian carried as recognising the ascetic Peter 'as almost one of their own' (p. 269), and that John's audience would see in Peter a saint 'of equal standing with those who had suffered in giving witness for their faith in Christ' (p. 270).

[64] See e.g. Severus' descriptions of the forty martyrs of Sebaste (*Homiliae cathedrales* 18 [*PO* 37, pp. 6–23]), the Maccabean martyrs (ibid., 52 [*PO* 4, pp. 7–23]), the martyrs Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus (ibid., 78 [*PO* 20, pp. 277–95]), and the martyrs Barlaha (ibid., 73 [*PO* 12, pp. 90–96]), Julian (ibid., 75 [*PO* 12, pp. 112–32]) and Drosis (ibid., 100 [*PO* 22, pp. 230–48]).

[65] Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae selectae* 6.4.9 (vol. 1, p. 304 Brooks). Dioscorus died in exile in 454.

[66] Ibid., 6.8.5 (vol. 1, p. 467 Brooks).

[67] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.7e (*CSCO* 83, p. 226).

[68] Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae selectae* 6.5.11 (vol. 1, p. 371 Brooks).

tribulations, torments and deaths'.[69] Having privileged a narrative of immediately fatal suffering as a way of identifying God's saints, Philoxenus then connects post-Constantinian saints with these earlier martyrs, writing: 'And when the pagan persecution ceased, it was from heretics that the holy fathers and the teachers of orthodoxy again were enduring exiles, tribulations, appearances in courts and prisons, and various sufferings in all regions'.[70] This passage serves as a transition to link the less self-evidently persecutorial suffering of monasticism with the violent physical torture suffered by earlier saints. Philoxenus continues by explaining:

> Other saints went out to solitude and in the mountains and they were in the desert, in hunger, thirst, nakedness and unlimited austerity. Even with the labour of their hands it was very difficult to gather their food. They were contending until blood in the *agunā* against sin, and they were fighting against all the desires of the body and contending with the passions of the soul.[71]

During his time in Mabbug, Philoxenus thus uses a familiar rhetoric of persecution and suffering to define God's true saints, but he employs that rhetoric to equate the persecution and violence suffered by the earlier martyrs with the voluntary ascetic struggles in which his audience is engaged.

As Castelli notes, an interpretive audience and not just an act of violence is necessary to make a martyr: the definition of martyrdom is not limited to particular acts of violence. Diane Fruchtman has shown that since 'the martyr requires interpretation to become a martyr', then 'proper interpretation can make martyrs out of even those Christians who do not die in persecution', making the status of the martyr available to a wider audience of Christians through non-fatal forms of witnessing to and suffering for Christian orthodoxy.[72] Philoxenus and his colleagues privileged a narrative of persecution and suffering as a way of identifying God's saints that made the language of martyrdom available to their community whether or not they were being killed for their doctrinal commitments. Fruchtman has shown that making martyrdom accessible to Prudentius' fifth-century audience in the Latin West, for example, helped to engender 'a worldview capable of transporting fifth-century Christians into the experience of the much-mythologized early, persecuted Church'.[73] Through their sixth-

[69] Philoxenus, *Letter to Patricius* 126 (*PO* 30, pp. 866–68, quotes at p. 868).
[70] Ibid., 127 (*PO* 30, p. 868). [71] Ibid. [72] Fruchtman, 'Modeling', 142.
[73] Ibid., 132. Fruchtman, *Living in a Martyrial World*, 24–253, makes similar arguments for Paulinus and Augustine in addition to Prudentius.

century writings, Zachariah, John Rufus, Philoxenus and Severus also expanded the ways in which they could connect anti-Chalcedonian Christians to the idealised heroes of the early Christian martyrs, similarly in the hope that they and their opponents would see them 'as martyrs and, therefore, as [orthodox] Christians'.[74]

John of Ephesus: Violence in Anti-Chalcedonian Rhetoric after Justinian

In the later sixth century, after the Second Council of Constantinople, in retrospect, brought an end to imperial efforts to find an acceptable compromise over Chalcedon, John of Ephesus used early Christian martyrs' stories in his *Church History* and *Lives of the Eastern Saints* in the same way as his earlier counterparts, in an effort to encourage his audience to endure material and physical hardships that he claimed were caused by unjust persecution on account of their rejection of imperial orthodoxy. As Peter Bell writes, John of Ephesus '"constructs" a persecuted Miaphysite community'.[75] Throughout his writings, John highlights the praiseworthy perseverance of the anti-Chalcedonian saints who struggled against numerous opponents, although, as Jan van Ginkel has also noticed, they only rarely suffered death immediately from these struggles.[76] Like his predecessors, John of Ephesus encourages his audience, who in this case faced renewed periods of physically violent persecution under Justin II, to conflate recent anti-Chalcedonian saints with the respected early Christian martyrs, and to view pro-Chalcedonian leaders as reminiscent of earlier Roman persecutors.

Stories of violence and persecution pervade Part II of John's *Church History*, for example, which tells stories of persecutions under Justin I and after Justinian's council of 536 that condemned Severus, persecutions that had renewed significance for an audience facing increasing hostility during the later reign of Justin II.[77] As Volker Menze notes, John 'described the

[74] Fruchtman, 'Modeling', 155.

[75] P. Bell, *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation* (Oxford, 2013) 182–83.

[76] In relation to John of Ephesus, see Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 174: 'In John's account there were but few real martyrs during the persecutions. Most of those expelled died in exile, but not through violence from their religious opponents'. Van Ginkel acknowledges, at p. 44, that John's *Lives* intentionally associated his recent heroes with the early Christian martyrs. As Bremmer notes in Chapter 2 of this volume, p. 60, however, even localised or sporadic persecution can have a significant and wide-ranging impact.

[77] On the council of 536, see Menze, *Justinian*, 110.

Chalcedonians as cruel torturers who showed no mercy towards the non-Chalcedonian ascetics'.[78] John records numerous tales of bishops and monks being forced into exile under Justin I,[79] highlighting the added cruelty of their removal in the middle of winter storms when they suffered not only from the expulsion but also from bitter cold and hunger.[80] These descriptions go hand in hand with frequent accounts of imprisonment under Justin I, sometimes including actively violent torture, but more often torments from their environment such as from the cold, illness and rats.[81] Some, like Mara, the bishop of Amida, 'chose to be driven away together with the staunch (ones) and to leave his see and not to succumb to loving the bishop's chair more than the truth of the immaculate orthodox faith. So he accepted exile for the sake of Christ's truth'.[82] John describes that after Abraham bar Kaili became the Chalcedonian bishop of Amida in 527, '[t]hen Satan possessed him totally and he devoted himself to violent persecution without mercy, to pillage and the destruction of people's souls'.[83] John reinforces this message of the physical violence that Christian saints faced through numerous other examples.

Like his *Church History*, John's *Lives of the Eastern Saints* also relies heavily on a rhetoric of struggle to help his contemporary audience feel a shared sense of persecution and resist the pressures to accept imperial orthodoxy. As Jeanne-Nicole Mellon Saint-Laurent writes, 'John made the saints' features iconic of the Miaphysite body as a whole: they were poor, persecuted, and divinely ordained to survive'.[84] Sometimes the persecution that John describes is at the hands of individual evildoers, and sometimes more generally 'the Synodists' or 'the heretics' – that is, Chalcedonian Christians. The most notable individual persecutor in John's *Lives* is Ephraim of Amida, bishop of Antioch from 526/27 until his death in 544/45 and a zealous supporter of Chalcedonian doctrine.[85]

[78] Ibid., 109.
[79] See e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Chronicle* 3 (*CSCO* 104, pp. 16–24). All translations of this work are from W. Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle (Known Also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin), Part III* (Liverpool, 1996).
[80] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Chronicle* 3 (*CSCO* 104, pp. 21–24, 27–44).
[81] Ibid., 3 (*CSCO* 104, pp. 21–24, 27–32).
[82] Ibid., 3 (*CSCO* 104, p. 31).
[83] Ibid., 3 (*CSCO* 104, pp. 32–33).
[84] J.-N. Mellon Saint-Laurent, *Missionary Stories and the Formation of the Syriac Churches* (Berkeley, 2015) 72.
[85] For Ephraim's life, I have used the dates in P. Allen and B. Neil, *Crisis Management in Late Antiquity (410–590 CE): A Survey of the Evidence from Episcopal Letters* (Boston, 2013) 74. See also J. Lebon, 'Ephrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche, 526–544', in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Charles Moeller à l'occasion de son jubilé de 50 années de professorat à l'Université de Louvain, 1863–1913*, vol. 1 (Leuven, 1914) 197–214. Ephraim was the *comes* of the East and came to Antioch to deal with the

John demonises Ephraim, whose persecution of 536/37 was particularly aggressive, suggesting that he was brutal in his efforts to eradicate the 'heresy' of anti-Chalcedonian Christianity. John introduces him as follows in the *Life* of Thomas the Armenian:

> After twelve years . . . the smoke of heretical persecution was being exhaled in the same district of Armenia, the instigator and perpetrator of these things being the likeness of the original Antichrist (ἀντίχριστος), the man . . . whose name was Ephraim bar Afyānā of Amida, who in his own person displayed beforehand in the church of God all the things that are to be done in the world at the end by the false Christ (*mšiḥā dagālā*).[86]

In his *Life* of John of Tella, John says that Ephraim 'inflicted on him [John of Tella] severe tortures' until he 'died at their hands' in 'the *agune* of martyrdom'.[87] Stories valorising these ascetics' perseverance through such violent persecutions would have had newly personal significance for Christians being pressured to accept imperial orthodoxy decades later under Justin II.[88]

John makes explicit that the persecutions he describes centred on the disagreements over Chalcedon, and sometimes began with physical efforts to force Christians to be in communion with Chalcedonian clergy.[89] John describes Justin I's ascension to the throne by saying:

> [H]e was making a beginning of divisions and contentions in the Church of God by introducing the wicked Council of Chalcedon, and from that time forward by order of the same schismatic emperor, everyone who did not assent to the reception and introduction of the council lived under persecution and expulsion.[90]

earthquake of 526, allegedly finding the see vacated by Euphrasius. On the persecution in 536/37, see Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 40; Menze, *Justinian*, 110, 119–20; Mellon Saint-Laurent, *Missionary Stories*, 74.

[86] John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, pp. 293–94). All translations of this work are taken from *PO* 17–19 (beneath the Syriac text), with slight modifications.

[87] John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 18, pp. 522–23), cf. ibid. (*PO* 19, p. 153).

[88] P. Wood, *'We Have No King but Christ': Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400–585)* (New York, 2010) 161, makes a similar observation regarding another Syriac text that survives in a sixth-century manuscript: 'The tone of the [*Julian*] *Romance* as a whole, celebrating the ability of true Christians to resist persecution and of Edessa standing alone against the persecutor, while ostensibly discussing the distant past, actually carried a covert significance for contemporary Miaphysites in an era when some prominent Edessenes were preparing to support Chalcedon'. See also D. Schwartz, 'Religious Violence and Eschatology in the *Syriac Julian Romance*', *JECS* 19 (2011) 565–87.

[89] See e.g. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, pp. 95–96, 98, 103). Note also Menze's discussion in *Justinian*, 158–65 of the anti-Chalcedonian Eucharist.

[90] John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, p. 187); cf. ibid. (*PO* 18, pp. 608, 663, 685–86).

While some anti-Chalcedonian Christians attended church with Chalcedonian clergy but refused to be in communion with them,[91] John suggests that many joined the imperial Church,[92] while still others 'did not yield' and were 'expelled and ejected and scattered and dispersed over the regions'.[93] In a polemical story about Bishop Abraham bar Kaili's persecution of Christians in Amida, John describes the bishop's violent use of military personnel to persecute his opponents, including physical violence against their bodies, such as forcing them to receive the Eucharist from a Chalcedonian priest.[94] In addition to the stories of force-fed Eucharists, John also narrates other stories of torture, imprisonment and more rarely death, the last of which of course would have most clearly recalled for John's audience the martyr stories of earlier centuries.

As noted elsewhere, John of Ephesus' writings include numerous stories of the imprisonment of his saints, and of John himself, and many of these stories include explicit descriptions of physical suffering.[95] He writes that powerful Chalcedonian Christians 'expelled many by the use of barbarian troops, and many they arrested and imprisoned, and many they drove to death by stripes inflicted with rods'.[96] When the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic Sergius stood firm against Chalcedonian opponents and refused to stop preaching to a crowd, John writes, the Chalcedonian leaders lured Sergius away, beat him and sent him into exile in an Armenian monastery, where Chalcedonian overseers used to 'reckon it as an act of justice to torture believers; and accordingly they would stand over them like executioners' and physically abuse them.[97] John claims that Christians who rejected the Council of Chalcedon suffered violent persecution in his own day that should recall for his audience the violence that the Christian martyrs of old suffered in earlier centuries.

John's most explicit comparison between sixth-century martyrdom and the famous pre-Constantinian Christian martyrs is in the story of John of Tella, already mentioned above. Ephraim had 'inflicted on him severe

[91] Ibid. (*PO* 17, p. 102). [92] See e.g. ibid. (*PO* 18, p. 514).

[93] Ibid. (*PO* 18, p. 621); cf. ibid. (*PO* 17, pp. 213–14). See also C. Shepardson, 'Martyrs of Exile: John of Ephesus and Religious Persecution', in É. Fournier and W. Mayer (eds.), *Heirs of Roman Persecution: Studies on a Christian and Para-Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity* (London, 2020) 277–95.

[94] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Chronicle* 3 (*CSCO* 104, pp. 34–35); cf. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, p. 96). On the skewed representation of Abraham's episcopal use of violence by John of Ephesus, see Menze, *Justinian*, 195, 235–44.

[95] This paragraph and the next draw on Shepardson, 'Martyrs of Exile'.

[96] John of Ephesus *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, p. 96); cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Chronicle* 3 (*CSCO* 104, p. 21).

[97] John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, pp. 103–104); cf. ibid. (*PO* 17, p. 136).

torments and oppressive, bitter imprisonments, and thus he [John of Tella] suffered martyrdom and died at their hands there' after 'undergoing the *agune* of martyrdom inflicted upon him there and the successions of tortures upon tortures that were imposed on him in daily variety'.[98] John of Ephesus even explicitly links this tortured sixth-century ascetic to the orthodox pre-Constantinian martyrs:

> the burning, that is heretical, darts of his persecutors were not able to pierce and penetrate the sound breastplate of his constancy, though many beasts were set around him on all sides to guard him, like that which the holy Ignatius also, the bishop and martyr to whom at the beginning we compared this second Ignatius, as he is indeed exceedingly like, thus wrote in his epistle to the Ephesians.[99]

John of Ephesus completes this explicit comparison by writing 'and thus he ended his life in this conflict in a great martyrdom'.[100] As Menze has argued, after the 530s especially, Christian leaders who rejected Chalcedon 'narrated the path leading to their current position of being the discriminated and persecuted apostolic Church'.[101]

Like his predecessors, however, John expanded rare examples of fatal anti-Chalcedonian persecution like the one of John of Tella with other examples of his community's suffering in ways that were not fatal and sometimes were not even caused by Chalcedonian opponents. He suggests, for example, that natural disasters caused the widespread suffering of God's saints, on the one hand, and that threats of material loss were a significant cause of apostasy from his Church, on the other.[102] According to John, exile, like the threat of material loss, was another prominent strategy in the persecution of his community of so-called 'heretics',[103] and he sometimes explicitly describes

[98] Ibid. (*PO* 18, pp. 522–23).
[99] Ibid. (*PO* 18, p. 523); cf. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistula ad Romanos* 5 (*SC* 10bis, p. 112).
[100] John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 18, p. 524).
[101] Menze, *Justinian*, 272.
[102] See C. Shepardson, 'Give It Up for God: Wealth, Suffering, and the Rhetoric of Religious Persecution in John of Ephesus' *Church History*', in C. de Wet and W. Mayer (eds.), *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* (London, 2018) 86–109.
[103] Of course, exile was already used extensively in the fourth century and earlier, although using it as an imperial strategy against Christian 'heretics' only began in the fourth century once the empire became involved in the maintenance of Christian 'orthodoxy'. On earlier exile, see D. Washburn, *Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284–476 CE* (New York, 2013). On the development of imperial uses of exile, see É. Fournier, 'Constantine and Episcopal Banishment: Continuity and Change in the Settlement of Christian Disputes', in J. Hillner, J. Enberg and J. Ulrich (eds.), *Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity* (Frankfurt, 2016) 47–66.

it as another form of martyrdom, even though his protagonists rarely died specifically or quickly from the impositions of their expulsion.[104]

Through such rhetorical strategies, John of Ephesus and his earlier colleagues John Rufus, Zachariah, Philoxenus and Severus portray true Christians as in grave danger, but not always through mortal physical violence against their bodies because of religious persecution.[105] Their willingness to make martyrdom available to saints who had suffered in persecution but had not died from it, and even for their own audiences' struggles against sin, was not unique in Late Antiquity, as Fruchtman's work has shown, but is consonant with the more expansive definition of martyrs that she suggests, namely, 'an individual who, by virtue of suffering, willingness to suffer, mimetic identification with an exemplary sufferer, and/or death, is employed by an author or community to serve as a witness to some communally accessible truth'.[106] These anti-Chalcedonian authors thus shaped their stories about recent events by constructing narratives of persecution, violence, suffering and martyrdom that recalled the rhetoric and figures of early Christianity, causing their opponents to emerge from their texts in the image of earlier imperial persecutors, and leaving their anti-Chalcedonian audiences in the role of the early Christian martyrs who were respected by Christians across the contemporary doctrinal divides.

Conclusion

In periods of the fifth and sixth centuries, anti-Chalcedonian Christians faced various pressures to abandon their bishops in favour of Chalcedonian clergy. During an expulsion from Antioch in the early 480s, for example, Philoxenus enjoined the monks of Teleda not to abandon the faith in the face of 'persecution',[107] and from his exile from Mabbug he wrote with dismay:

> As it is said, certain ones have joined the number of the persecutors rather than to those being persecuted and were found on the side of those who

[104] E.g. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, pp. 43–44, 186). See Shepardson, 'Martyrs of Exile'.

[105] Here we should note Bendlin's observation, this volume, p. 146, that while cultural violence may at first seem less harmful than physical violence, it nevertheless 'evokes and reinforces all forms of violence, and renders them acceptable'.

[106] Fruchtman, *Living in a Martyrial World*, 17.

[107] Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Teleda* (pp. 1–2 Guidi).

> contend against Christ and not in the group of those who suffer for him and with him. And, it is said, it was especially certain clergy.[108]

These authors countered the temptations of apostasy by arguing that God's true saints suffered, like the famous Christian martyrs whose celebrations punctuated the calendar throughout the year, teaching that anyone who persevered in the unjust sufferings of this life would soon be rewarded in the eternal life to come.

The early controversies over the Council of Chalcedon offer an excellent opportunity to trace the construction of narratives of violence by those who ultimately lost the struggle to define imperial orthodoxy. In these years of shifting allegiances and imperial definitions of orthodoxy, anti-Chalcedonian leaders adapted earlier narratives of martyrdom and persecution as markers of true Christians to fit their changing contexts, shaping their descriptions of recent events in order to construct a narrative of widespread persecutory violence that revealed themselves to be the latest in a long line of persecuted Christian martyr-saints whom God would reward.[109] This identification became so strongly tied to their community that even in periods of their imperial power, they chose to redefine the nature of their suffering rather than exchange their identity as suffering saints for a narrative of earthly triumphalism.[110] Through such narratives of violence, these authors attempted to wrest from those with imperial power the certainty of God's support, proof of their legitimacy, and the title of Christian orthodoxy.

[108] Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (*CSCO* 231, p. 81); trans. Michelson, *Practical Christology*, 33.

[109] This phenomenon is not unique to this case study, nor does it end in the sixth century, as shown by A. Papaconstantinou, 'Historiography, Hagiography, and the Making of the Coptic "Church of the Martyrs" in Early Islamic Egypt', *DOP* 60 (2006) 65–86, who argues that Egyptian Christian narratives created a similar new identity-narrative based on martyrdom and suffering in the early Islamic period.

[110] This echoes the conclusions by Kippenberg in this volume, pp. 44–45, that the meaning of events is linked to the ways a community chooses to narrate them, which in turn is influenced by their particular context and is often 'based on prefigurations in the canonical religious tradition'.

CHAPTER 16

Fighting for Chalcedon: Vitalian's Rebellion against Anastasius[*]

Hugh Elton

Introduction

Roman generals in the late fifth century were rarely active participants in theological disputes. Thus, when Vitalian revolted against the Emperor Anastasius (491–518) in Thrace in 513, at least partly motivated by the emperor's anti-Chalcedonian policies, and led an army to Constantinople, this was not behaviour typical of the period. There was initially no fighting, however, and during negotiations Anastasius promised that the pope would be invited to settle Vitalian's religious concerns. This did not happen and in 514 Anastasius sent an army against Vitalian. When Anastasius' troops were defeated, Vitalian again marched on Constantinople and forced the emperor to organise a Church council at Heraclea. Although the pope and Eastern bishops were invited, the council did not take place. Vitalian then marched on Constantinople for a third time in 515, but he was defeated in fighting on land and sea. This revolt is exceptional in Late Antique history because of its religious motivation, which enables us to ask some interesting questions about imperial and religious politics in the early sixth century.[1]

The Religious Background to Vitalian's Revolt

Religious affairs took up much of the time of fifth- and sixth-century emperors and their advisers. The religious background to Vitalian's revolt as outlined here starts at Chalcedon, though this is only a convenient

* My thanks to participants in the 'Religious Violence in the Ancient World' conference and the Late Roman Seminar at Oxford, as well as to Geoffrey Greatrex and Fiona Haarer for helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

[1] For the frequent involvement of politics (and other factors) in cases of religious violence, see the General Introduction, p. 4, and Kippenberg, p. 45, both this volume.

staging post in the complex developments of the fifth century.[2] In the first half of the fifth century, Theodosius II held councils at Ephesus in 431 and 449 and Marcian at Chalcedon in 451 as they tried to bring their bishops into agreement. Emperors could often create consensus between bishops at a council, but this did not mean that there was genuine or lasting agreement. Thus, the Council of Chalcedon resolved the existing Antiochene–Alexandrian differences to the satisfaction of the emperor and with the acceptance of the majority of moderate Eastern bishops. However, it did not satisfy less moderate Eastern bishops, many Eastern monks, or Pope Leo in the West.[3] The problem that all participants faced was that moderate solutions would not satisfy extremists, yet attempting to satisfy extremists produced solutions unacceptable to the moderates. And repeatedly, participants who were dissatisfied appealed to emperor and pope, both of whom attempted to create religious unity, but this was difficult to achieve given the emperor's rejection of the Tome of Leo and the pope's insistence on it. To create unity, one of these leaders would have to make concessions, an issue complicated by the fact that accepting the Tome of Leo would not resolve the theological issues that divided Eastern bishops and monks.

Although the Emperor Leo I (457–74) was able to keep religious tensions under control, any consensus collapsed early in the reign of Zeno (474–91) when Basiliscus seized imperial power in 475. By issuing his *Encyclical*, Basiliscus asserted an imperial prerogative of determining Church doctrine. In terms of the direction (and probably the wording), Basiliscus was heavily influenced by Timothy Aelurus, to whom the *Encyclical* was addressed and who was soon restored by the Emperor Leo to Alexandria. Once Zeno had regained control of Constantinople from Basiliscus in 476, he also mandated doctrine with the *Henotikon* in 482, which unlike the *Encyclical* included a creed. The *Henotikon* was probably written by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Acacius (472–89), and followed the approach of avoiding all mention of Chalcedon, thus hoping to avoid disagreements over the Council. However, though mostly accepted in the East, it was hard for a pope to accept because it did not specifically approve of the Tome of Leo. Views of the *Henotikon* vary.

[2] See, for a similar overview, also Shepardson, this volume, pp. 346–48.

[3] A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. Band 2/1: Das Konzil von Chalcedon (451); Rezeption und Widerspruch (451–518)* (Freiburg, 1986); G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, 'The Council of Chalcedon', with additions by M. Whitby, in G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Oxford, 2006) 259–319.

Some admire it for avoiding confrontation, but for the sixth-century Bishop Facundus of Hermiane, Zeno 'did not understand that confusion does not create unity'.[4]

These actions by Basiliscus and Zeno show that late fifth-century emperors were prepared to define doctrine by edict. This was an evolution from allowing groups of bishops to self-manage (which did not work well) or managing groups of bishops with imperial officials (which did not work well either). For emperors to define doctrine by edict was not revolutionary, with Theodosius I's *cunctos populos* edict of 380 defining orthodoxy as Nicene and naming Bishop Damasus of Rome and Peter of Alexandria as orthodox.[5] However, doctrine by edict was no more successful than doctrine by council (managed or not) of bishops. Direct imperial involvement, however, may have made emperors appear more responsible for religious affairs. Whereas Theodosius I or II were appealed to by dissenting bishops, Anastasius and Justin I dictated to them, but it is unclear whether this was a change in imperial practice, a reflection of imperial personality, or a combination of both factors.

We can now focus more closely on religious events in Anastasius' reign.[6] Although Anastasius is often described as anti-Chalcedonian (a position that many sixth-century sources and modern scholars term monophysitism, an imposed rather than self-selected descriptor), a better description might be pro-*Henotikon*. However, binary approaches, like orthodox and heretic, Chalcedonian and monophysite, pro- and anti-Chalcedon, or pro- and anti-*Henotikon*, regardless of the subtlety of such labels, may not always be the best historical approach. Binary labelling reinforces essentialist thinking and tends to result in concepts of winners and losers. Some participants did see events in these terms, but this is not a necessary structure or a point of view of all participants.[7] With no universal agreement on the framing of the issues, we should accept that the issues were different for each participant. Grillmeier summarises the complexities of the *Henotikon* well:

[4] Facundus of Hermiane, *Pro defensione trium capitulorum* 12.4 (*PL* 67, col. 845B).
[5] *Codex Theodosianus* 16.1.2 (380), followed by 16.1.3 (381).
[6] P. Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire: The Religious Policy of Anastasius the First, 491–518*, 2nd ed. (Thessaloniki, 1974); F. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (Cambridge, 2006); M. Meier, *Anastasios I.: Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 2009).
[7] Cf. e.g. S. Atran, 'The Devoted Actor: Unconditional Commitment and Intractable Conflict across Cultures', *Current Anthropology* 57, Supplement 13 (2016) 192–203, and Dijkstra, this volume, p. 286.

> In order to judge the theological value of the dispute that was about to flare up, one has to ask oneself quietly each time whether the text of the *Henoticon* is really being discussed and interpreted, or whether each of the parties that were being formed imposes its own preconceived reading or position.[8]

And though we can discuss the beliefs of individuals in relation to Chalcedon, it is rare for our evidence to comment on how strongly these opinions were held and whether they changed over time. Even dramatic change was possible, shown by Juvenal of Jerusalem's crossing of the aisle at Chalcedon and Justin I's resolution of the Acacian schism. Similarly, the Laurentian schism suggests that it would have been possible for a pope to accept the *Henotikon*.[9]

Anastasius succeeded Zeno as emperor in 491. When Zeno's widow, Ariadne, appeared in the Hippodrome, the *De ceremoniis* records that the crowd requested 'an orthodox emperor', though we have no way of knowing what this meant to them.[10] Anastasius continued Zeno's approach to religious affairs, following the *Henotikon* and trying to bring all his subjects into unity. Although he appears initially to have been patient and engaged with all parties, he exiled the Patriarch of Constantinople, Euphemius, in 496 and by about 508 had become markedly less tolerant of opposition to the *Henotikon*. Euphemius' successor, Macedonius, was exiled in 511 from Constantinople (sent to Euchaita in Pontus) and Flavian was exiled in 512 from Antioch (sent to Petra in Lazica), to be replaced with Timothy and Severus respectively.[11] Around the same time, the *trishagion* was altered at Anastasius' command, with the addition of the clause 'who was crucified for us' (σταυροθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς). This clause had been introduced by Peter the Fuller in Antioch around 470 and by Anastasius' reign had become associated with anti-Chalcedonian belief.[12]

[8] Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus 2/1*, 269, trans. in English as *Christ in Christian Tradition. Volume 2.1: Reception and Contradiction – The Development of the Discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the Beginning of the Reign of Justinian* (London, 1987) 269; cf. P. Allen and B. Neil, *Crisis Management in Late Antiquity (410–590 CE): A Survey of the Evidence from Episcopal Letters* (Leiden, 2013) 109: 'the trouble with letters, though, is that it is hard to tell when the recipient is not listening'.

[9] P. A. B. Llewellyn, 'The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism: Priests and Senators', *ChHist* 45 (1976) 417–27.

[10] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis* 1.92 (p. 418 Reiske).

[11] Malalas, *Chronographia* 16.11 (p. 327 Thurn); J. Dijkstra and G. Greatrex, 'Patriarchs and Politics in Constantinople in the Reign of Anastasius (with a Reedition of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 59)', *Millennium* 6 (2009) 223–64; R. Kosinski, 'The Exiled Bishops of Constantinople from the Fourth to the Late Sixth Century', *Studia Ceranea* 5 (2015) 231–47.

[12] M. Meier, 'Σταυροθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς – Der Aufstand gegen Anastasios im Jahr 512', *Millennium* 4 (2007) 157–237, an excellent article which ranges more widely than suggested by the title;

Riots followed its introduction in Constantinople, during which the crowd attempted to acclaim Areobindus as emperor. Areobindus wisely fled. Twenty years later during the Nika riot, Anastasius' nephew Hypatius was also acclaimed by the crowd but was unable to escape, and Justinian was forced to execute him.[13] In 512, Anastasius faced down the Hippodrome crowd, but also rescinded the addition to the *trishagion*. These events show the strength of popular opposition to Anastasius' theological direction on the eve of Vitalian's revolt.[14] Harder to determine is whether this riot was any different from other events in the city's history. Numerous popular demonstrations concerning religion in the fifth century, such as riots in favour of John Chrysostom or the tensions during the patriarchate of Nestorius, suggest that this moment was not unique.

Late Antique Generals and Religious Politics

Civil war, revolt and rebellion were as old as the Roman state, but using violence to impose a particular form of Christianity did not start until the early fourth century. The first cases were by the state itself, using the army to force conformity by violence or the threat of violence. The early approaches to the Donatists suggests that emperors were still coming to terms with how to rule a Christian empire. Violence could also be used to protect Christians, as in the Persian war of 421–22, started because of persecution of Christians in Persia. Although Christian writers saw military action against Persia as an appropriate response, the imperial government could have taken other approaches, including diplomacy and resettling refugees.[15] Theodosius' campaign against Eugenius in 394 was seen by most contemporaries as the emperor suppressing a challenger, but in later histories it was also interpreted as a Christian campaign against pagans.[16] Perhaps the closest parallel to Vitalian's revolt was the threat of war between Constans and Constantius II following the Council of Serdica in 343. After the Council had split into Western and Eastern factions, the

R. Kosinski, 'Peter the Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch (471–488)', *ByzSlav* 68 (2010) 49–73 at 62, 69–70.

[13] G. Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius, *quem vidit validum Parthus sensitque timendum*: An Investigation of His Career', *Byzantion* 66 (1996) 120–42, and Greatrex, this volume, p. 405.

[14] For the impact of urban crowds on imperial decisionmaking in the fifth and sixth centuries, see in more detail Chapter 17 by Greatrex, this volume, where Anastasius' appearance in the Hippodrome without a crown is discussed at p. 395.

[15] G. Greatrex, 'The Two Fifth-Century Wars between Rome and Persia', *Florilegium* 12 (1993) 1–14.

[16] J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court* (Oxford, 1975) 238–52.

Western bishops restored two bishops exiled by Constantius, Paul to Constantinople and Athanasius to Alexandria. Constans then threatened to restore the two bishops himself by force if his brother would not do so. Constantius restored the bishops in 345, thus avoiding the war. No emperor threatened to use the army again in this way, and it seems likely that Constans, aged only twenty at the time, was overruling some of his advisers.[17]

Late Roman generals were far from being ignorant of religious affairs or theological disputes. Bishops did send letters containing theological material to generals, though this does not mean that the soldiers read them.[18] However, military officials were often used to manage ecclesiastical affairs, for example presiding over the First Council of Ephesus and various sessions of Chalcedon or over the election of the metropolitan of Cyprus in 431. To do this effectively required a good knowledge of both issues and personalities. However, even when well briefed, disasters still occurred. The First Council of Ephesus was not a triumph of management, but probably not because of Candidianus' inadequate knowledge of the issues and personalities.[19] A related question is how well these generals understood the theology. Most generals were well educated, though few were famous for their literary knowledge. The Isaurian Illus was described in Damascius' *Life of Isidore* as 'fond of learning' (φιλόλογος). When he was interested in finding a speaker on the nature of the soul, another Isaurian general, Marsus, recommended Pamprepius to Illus; were these two soldiers unusual in their interest in philosophy? Although Damascius dismissively suggests that Illus was 'tricked by his highly-wrought wordiness', Illus was noted for reading during the lengthy siege of Papirius in the mid-480s.[20] And it may be that some generals had a better understanding of the issues than some bishops. In 458 Bishop Alypius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, appointed after the Council, in his response to the Emperor Leo's

[17] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.22–23 (*GCS* NF 1, pp. 123–32); T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius* (Cambridge, MA, 1993) 89–90; cf. doubts expressed by R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318–381* (Edinburgh, 1988) 307–308.

[18] J. J. McLaughlin, 'Bridging the Cultural Divide: Libanius, Ellebichus, and Letters to "Barbarian" Generals', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7 (2014) 253–79; D. Parnell, 'The Social Networks of Justinian's Generals', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8 (2015) 114–35.

[19] R. Delmaire, 'Les dignitaires laïcs au concile de Chalcédoine: notes sur la hiérarchie et les préséances au milieu du V^e^ siècle', *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 141–75; F. G. B. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2006) 20–21, 137–39.

[20] Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, fr. 77 D (pp. 198–200 Athanassiadi). See R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988); P. Athanassiadi, 'Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius', *JHS* 113 (1993) 1–29.

letter of enquiry claimed not to know what was done there though he viewed it as orthodox.[21]

As well as receiving letters and managing councils, generals interacted with bishops and their interests as part of the imperial government. Early in the reign of Marcian, Theodoret of Cyrrhus thanked Aspar for helping to lift his exile. In the reign of Leo, Aspar had spoken in support of Amphilochius of Side when the latter opposed Chalcedon, but also defended Timothy Aelurus against the pro-Chalcedonian Patriarch of Constantinople, Gennadius. Thus, Aspar either had changing opinions about Chalcedon or was motivated by something other than theology, perhaps by process.[22] Aspar was supposedly an 'Arian', but this did not stop him from serving the emperor. Also important is the concept of duty to the emperor which overrode personal feelings. When Aspar's son Patricius was appointed as *caesar* in 470/71, the Emperor Leo declared publicly that Patricius would convert from Arianism; Patricius' personal belief was irrelevant to the emperor.[23] This was also true of imperial officials who were pagans like the quaestors Isocasius under Leo and Pamprepius under Zeno. Similarly, several of Anastasius' senior officials with strong religious convictions, including Patricius, Celer, Marinus and his nephew Hypatius, continued to be employed in his successor Justin I's reign despite the change in religious policy.[24] Fifth-century generals, then, were constantly exposed to religious politics, but both they and their emperors were more motivated by abstract virtues such as duty or loyalty than by personal belief.

Thus, although we know nothing of Vitalian's theological beliefs before his revolt, he came from a social group that was well informed about religious politics. Vitalian himself followed the predominant thought of the Latin Balkans, that is, a preference for Western Latin and pro-Tome of Leo theologies over Eastern Greek theologies with a nuanced understanding of Chalcedon.

The Sources for Vitalian's Revolt

The historical tradition for Vitalian's revolt is both fragmentary and complex, but was constructed in an environment the characteristics of

[21] *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.5.75–77; Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus 2/1*, 257.

[22] Theodoret, *Epistulae* 140 (*SC* 111, pp. 148–50); Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 111–12 De Boor); Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.7a (*CSCO* 83, pp. 178–79); M. McEvoy, 'Becoming Roman? The Not-So-Curious Case of Aspar and the Ardaburii', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 9 (2016) 483–511 at 495.

[23] *Vita Marcelli* 34 (pp. 316–17 Dagron); McEvoy, 'Becoming Roman?', 498–502.

[24] Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius', 124–32; Meier, 'Σταυροθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς', 185, 193, 195.

which we can suggest. Most of our sources were first influenced by what we could call the Anastasian spin-doctors, concerned that the emperor's perspective dominated contemporary interpretations. These imperial propaganda managers rarely had a direct influence on our source material, but their work influenced the environment in which it was written. Anything written after the reign of Anastasius would have been modified by the strongly pro-Chalcedonian interpretations of Justin I's propaganda managers, with these interpretations being different again after Vitalian's death in 520. Although some anti-Chalcedonians had by the mid-sixth century formed a separate parallel Church hierarchy, there were other possible outcomes to these disputes including unity with the pro-Chalcedonians and armed challenge to the emperor. Justin's team had therefore to walk a fine line, supporting the theology of Vitalian while at the same time avoiding encouraging the idea that military action against the emperor based on theology was acceptable.

The four main historical sources for the revolt are John of Antioch, John Malalas, Theodore Lector and Marcellinus Comes; most other sources are derived from these four traditions. A substantial fragment from John of Antioch preserved in the *Excerpta de insidiis* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus is the most important source.[25] The origin of this fragment depends on when John was writing. The Mariev position, of a classicising historian working in the early sixth century, would suggest that this fragment is the work of John of Antioch himself, while the Roberto position, of an early seventh-century compiler, means that this fragment comes from an unknown classicising writer.[26] John mentions all three attacks on the city, and has good details about the negotiations, though he does not mention the planned Church council and seems less interested in theological than military and political events. Stylistically, he prefers the term στρατηγός for *magister militum*, uses the form Laosthenion rather than Sosthenion, and refers to Constantinople as ἡ Κωνσταντίνου. He is prepared to use technical vocabulary, with glosses, for example, 'the so-called *excubitores*' and 'the so-called *dux*'.

[25] John of Antioch fr. 311 (pp. 534–42 Roberto) = fr. 242 (pp. 452–60 Mariev) = Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de insidiis* (pp. 143–47 De Boor).

[26] P. Van Nuffelen, 'John of Antioch, Inflated and Deflated. Or: How (Not) to Collect Fragments of Early Byzantine Historians', *Byzantion* 82 (2012) 437–50; U. Roberto, 'John Malalas as a Source for John of Antioch's *Historia Chronikè*: The Evidence of the *Excerpta historica Constantiniana*', in M. Meier, C. Radtki and F. Schulz (eds.), *Die Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas: Autor, Werk, Überlieferung* (Stuttgart, 2016) 267–86.

The next longest account is that of John Malalas, whose history survives mostly as an epitome rather than the original text.[27] There are two versions for Vitalian's revolt. The longest version comes from the main manuscript of Malalas, the Baroccianus. A shorter version is contained in the *Excerpta de insidiis*, with very minor differences (that is, adding 'a city of Greece' after the mention of Proclus' origin in Athens, omitting 'the Syrian' at the first mention of Marinus), but most significantly without the details of the sea battle included in the Baroccianus.[28] Malalas was born in Antioch around 490, but cannot be placed in Constantinople until the early 530s, when he could have talked to eyewitnesses. Historically, Malalas only mentions the second attack on the city, in which Hypatius was ransomed, and the third attack with the sea battle. There are no details concerning the Battle of Akris, while the planned Church council and the negotiations between Anastasius and Vitalian are omitted. Stylistically, Malalas uses στρατηλάτης for *magister militum*, though he avoids technical vocabulary. He uses Κωνσταντινούπολις for Constantinople and the form Sosthenion rather than Laosthenion.

Malalas' account was used by Evagrius and John of Nikiu. Evagrius' late sixth-century *Church History* shortens Malalas' text, omitting the reason for the revolt and the use of elemental sulphur by Marinus in the description of the sea battle. John of Nikiu's account also shortens the text, though he preserves Malalas' mention of elemental sulphur.[29] Two later Byzantine writers also made use of this tradition. Zonaras' account has Proclus helping Marianus (a mistake for Marinus), not with elemental sulphur, but with a reflective mirror (κάτοπτρον) which he claims was used by Archimedes at the siege of Syracuse in 212 BCE.[30] Nicephorus Callistus probably used Evagrius alone rather than Malalas directly since he mentions Marinus the Syrian commanding in a sea battle, but without elemental sulphur or reflective mirrors.[31]

[27] E. Jeffreys, B. Croke and R. Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas* (Sydney, 1990); Meier, Radtki and Schulz, *Weltchronik*, esp. the contribution by P. Carolla, 'John Malalas in the *Excerpta Constantiniana de insidiis (EI)*: a Philological and Literary Perspective', at pp. 239–52.

[28] Long recension: Malalas, *Chronographia* 16.16 (pp. 329–32 Thurn). Short recension: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de insidiis* (pp. 169–70 De Boor).

[29] Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.43 (pp. 145–56 Bidez and Parmentier); John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 89.71–88 (trans. R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* [Oxford, 1916] 130–32).

[30] Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum* 14.3.29–36 (vol. 2, pp. 261–62 Dindorf).

[31] Nicephorus Callistus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 16.38 (*PG* 147, col. 202); D. Brodka, 'Die Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas und die Kirchengeschichte des Nikephoros Xanthopulos Kallistos', in Meier, Radtki and Schulz, *Weltchronik*, 287–310.

The third source tradition is represented by Theodore Lector.[32] It mentions the first and second marches on the city, the Battle of Akris and the planned Church council in 514, but omits the third march and the sea battle in 515. Theodore's *Church History* was written in mid-sixth century Constantinople, so that Theodore, if not an eyewitness himself, would have had access to eyewitnesses. The original text of the *Church History* is lost and the surviving epitome does not cover the events of the revolt. Our knowledge of Theodore Lector's account is derived from Victor of Tonnuna and Theophanes, both based on Theodore.[33] The *Chronicle* of Victor of Tonnuna was written in Latin in Constantinople after the end of Justinian's reign. Victor's chronology is confused, with entries regarding the revolt in 510, 511 and 514 surrounding his entry on the *trishagion* riots which are wrongly located in 513, but makes no mention of the sea battle. Theophanes mentions the second attack on the city with the ransom of Hypatius and Sosthenion, and has good details about the negotiations but again omits the sea battle. This tradition also has Vitalian acclaimed in 512 rather than Areobindus.[34] Cedrenus' account is based entirely on Theophanes, but is somewhat abbreviated.[35] Stylistically, Theodore Lector appears to have used technical terms, since Theophanes describes Vitalian as the son of the *comes foederatorum* (κόμητος φοιδεράτων) Patriciolus.

The final source tradition is the chronicle of Marcellinus Comes who wrote in Constantinople during the early part of the reign of Justinian. He covers the first two marches on the capital, but omits both the planned Church council and the third march and sea battle from his account. He also knows that Hypatius was captured but does not describe the Battle of Akris. Marcellinus wrote in Latin, so his vocabulary cannot be compared

[32] G. C. Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1995); G. Greatrex, 'Théodore le Lecteur et son épitomateur anonyme du VII^{e} s.', in P. Blaudeau and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *L'historiographie tardo-antique et la transmission des savoirs* (Berlin, 2015) 121–42, esp. pp. 129–30.

[33] Victor of Tonnuna s.a. 510–11 (*MGH AA* 11, pp. 194–95) = Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 157–60 De Boor); Victor of Tonnuna s.a. 514 (*MGH AA* 11, p. 195) = Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 160–61 De Boor).

[34] V. Beševliev, 'Die Nachrichten des Malalas über die Bulgaren bei Theophanes', *Byzantina* 10 (1980) 339–46 argues for Theophanes' use of Malalas here. The language of the passage that he cites concerning Vitalian (Theophanes, *Chronographia* [pp. 160–61 De Boor] and Malalas, *Chronographia* 16.16 [pp. 329–30 Thurn]) is very generic. For Theophanes to be using Malalas requires him to copy some generic material from Malalas and then return to using Theodore Lector as a source. It seems simpler to suggest that Malalas and Theodore had similarly phrased generic passages, possibly drawing from another author; for the confusion of Vitalian and Areobindus, cf. Meier, 'Σταυροθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς', 167–68.

[35] Cedrenus, *Compendium historiarum* (pp. 632–33 Bekker).

with Greek writers though he does use the form Sosthenium and technical vocabulary such as *magister militum per Thracias*. Since the complete text of the chronicle is preserved we cannot attribute the omission of the Battle of Akris or the sea battle to the process of creating fragments or epitomes. This terse account of Vitalian's revolt therefore reflects the propaganda line of Justin I's reign, with Vitalian being presented not as a champion of Chalcedon but as a rebel against Anastasius. The information in Jordanes' *Romana* reading Vitalian is derived from Marcellinus.[36]

There are a few minor mentions in other sources. The *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene mentions Vitalian's revolt in Books 7 and 8, with each account drawn from a different source.[37] Neither is very detailed, with no divisions of events into years, geographical details, technical terms, or discussion of the various marches, the Battle of Akris, negotiations or the sea battle. The *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zachariah was used as a source by the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian which does not describe the revolt of Vitalian either. Another Constantinopolitan chronicle, the *Chronicon Paschale*, unfortunately has a lacuna covering 507–17 so says nothing about Vitalian. Finally, Severus of Antioch composed a short hymn, the title of which is 'On Vitalian the Tyrant and on the Victory of the Christ-loving Anastasius' and Vitalian is mentioned in Severus' *Homily* 34.[38]

Vitalian's Revolt

First, what do we know about Vitalian? He was born at Zaldaba, located in the province of Moesia Secunda according to John of Antioch and Procopius, but in the province of Scythia according to the *Synecdemus* of Hierocles. Zaldaba lies close to the boundary between the two provinces; either one of our sources is wrong or it was transferred from one province to the other.[39] There is some confusion as to Vitalian's ethnicity, with pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene calling him a Goth and Marcellinus Comes calling him a 'Scytha', though nothing about his ethnicity is mentioned in

[36] Marcellinus Comes s.a. 514–16 (*MGH AA* 11, pp. 98–99); Jordanes, *Romana* 357–58 (*MGH AA* 5, p. 46).
[37] Pseudo-Zachariah, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.13, 8.2 (*CSCO* 84, pp. 56–58, 62–63).
[38] Severus of Antioch, *Hymni* 262 (*PO* 7, pp. 710–11), and *Homiliae cathedrales* 34 (*PO* 36, pp. 430–34).
[39] Hierocles, *Synecdemus* 637.7; Procopius, *Buildings* 4.11.20; S. Torbatov, *Zaldaba* (Sofia, 2000) 89–90; S. Torbatov, 'Procop. De aedif. IV, 7, 12–14 and the Historical Geography of Moesia Secunda', *Archaeologia Bulgarica* 4 (2000) 58–77; D. Dana, I. Valeriev and D. Moreau, 'Un théonyme et des noms thraces nouveaux dans une dédicace grecque découverte à Zaldapa (Mésie Inférieure)', *ZPE* 202 (2017) 158–62.

John of Antioch, Malalas or Theodore Lector.[40] Even if Vitalian was a Goth, the significance of this is a subject on which scholars have differing opinions. Vitalian seems little different from other contemporary Roman officers from the Balkans such as Areobindus or Justin who appear different from Goths like Theoderic Triarius or Theoderic Strabo only because of their political choices.[41]

We also know a little about his family. The Thracian Cutzes, who served as a *dux* on the Eastern frontier in the late 520s, is described by Malalas as the son of Vitalian. Cutzes and his brothers Buzes and Venilus were certainly Thracian, but Vitalian is a common name in Thrace. Procopius describes Vitalian's nephew Ioannes in the same way and he is also described by an inscription as born in 'Mysia', that is, Moesia.[42] Other known relatives included the monk Leontius from 'Scythia'.[43] Syriac sources suggest other relationships though these are doubtful. The very sparse account in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian states that the Patriarch Macedonius was planning a revolt to be led by his nephew Vitalian. Since this is the only source to record the relationship (which is not mentioned in Michael's source, Pseudo-Zachariah), it seems likely that the relationship was invented.[44] The only mention of Vitalian before his revolt is in the Persian war of 502–506 when he accompanied his father, Patriciolus.[45] Theophanes describes him as the son of Patriciolus *comes foederatorum*, presumably the office that Patriciolus held during the war. This position was similar to a *comes rei militaris*, but involved command of a number of regiments of *foederati* instead of *katalogoi*.[46]

[40] P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge, 1997) 127–31, discusses these problems well; P. Allen and C. T. R Hayward, *Severus of Antioch* (London, 2004) 6, 11, confidently describe Vitalian as a Goth.

[41] Amory, *People and Identity*, 278–91; cf. H. W. Elton, 'Military Developments in the Fifth Century', in M. Maas (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila* (Cambridge, 2014) 125–39 at 133–34; McEvoy, 'Becoming Roman?'.

[42] D. A. Parnell, *Justinian's Men: Careers and Relationships of Byzantine Army Officers, 518–610* (London, 2017) 139–42. Cutzes: Malalas, *Chronographia* 18.26 (pp. 370–71 Thurn); cf. 14.37 (pp. 291–92 Thurn) with a similar description of Ardabur as 'son of Aspar'. Ioannes: Procopius, *Secret History* 5.7; *AE* 1998, 432.

[43] *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 216.

[44] Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 9.9 (vol. 4, p. 262 Chabot); the Syriac text reads Vitalios, which Chabot emends to Vitalianos; Haarer, *Anastasius*, 164 and A. Laniado, 'Jean d'Antioche et les débuts de la révolte de Vitalien', in Blaudeau and Van Nuffelen, *Historiographie tardo-antique*, 349–69 at 362–63, are sceptical about the relationship, though it is accepted by P. Allen, 'Church and Emperor in the Letters of Hormisdas I, Bishop of Rome (514–523)', in U. Heil and J. Ulrich (eds.), *Kirche und Kaiser in Antike und Spätantike* (Berlin, 2017) 320–36 at 327.

[45] Procopius, *Persian Wars* 1.8.3; Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle* 60 (*CSCO* 91, pp. 287–89).

[46] Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 157–60 De Boor); J. F. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians* (Berlin, 1984) 100–101.

The next mention of Vitalian is his revolt, which can be divided into three major phases, each of which involved leading an army against Constantinople. The first of these attacks came in 513.[47] According to John of Malalas, the motivation was 'the banishment of the bishops',[48] that is, Anastasius' exiling of Macedonius and Flavianus, although Marcellinus Comes only mentions Macedonius. John of Antioch notes that Anastasius ordered that 'bronze crosses bearing an inscription that explained the reasons for the rebellion against him be put up above the gates of the fortifications',[49] suggestive of religious motivations. However, John of Antioch also mentions that Vitalian rebelled because of the cancellation of the *annonae foederaticae* for certain regiments (*tagmata*) in Scythia and Thrace.[50] These troops were ultimately under the command of a certain Hypatius (not the nephew of Anastasius), probably holding the office of *magister militum per Thracias*. Vitalian may have held the same position as his father as *comes foederatorum*, though this post seems more likely to have been based in Constantinople than on the Danube.

After organising the murder of several officials of Hypatius and the *dux Moesiae*, Vitalian gained the support of the Thracian field army, suggesting that he was of some rank. The cancellation of the *annonae foederaticae* may be related to an edict, datable only to the reign of Anastasius, which mentions the difficulties in providing supplies for troops based in the diocese of Thrace (composed of six provinces: Europa, Rhodope, Haemimontus, Thracia, Scythia and Moesia Secunda).[51] Stein, followed by Jones, suggests that Anastasius abolished the Thracian *vicarius*, responsible for the administration of the diocese. Their argument is based on the Long Walls being administered by two *vicarii*, a civil official reporting to the praetorian prefect and a military official reporting to a *magister militum*.[52] Justinian's *Novella* 26 issued in 535 reports that this did not work well and so the two officials were replaced with a single *praetor* of Thrace. This arrangement was similar to the *praetores* of Paphlagonia, Lycaonia and

[47] A more compressed chronology is possible, starting the revolt in 514, but this packs much activity into a single campaigning season.

[48] Malalas, *Chronographia* 16.16 (p. 329 Thurn).

[49] John of Antioch fr. 311 (p. 534 Roberto) = fr. 242 (pp. 452, 454 Mariev). All translations of John's fragments are taken from E. Mariev, *Ioannis Antiocheni fragmenta quae supersunt omnia* (Berlin, 2008).

[50] John of Antioch fr. 311 (p. 534 Roberto) = fr. 242 (p. 452 Mariev); Laniado, 'Jean d'Antioche'.

[51] *Codex Justinianus* 10.27.2.10.

[52] E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas Empire. Tome II: de la disparition de l'empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–565)* (Paris, 1959) 89–90, 466; A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964) 263, 1126 (n. 60); J. Wiewiorowski, 'Vicarius Thraciarum in the 4th and 5th centuries: Some Remarks', *ByzF* 30 (2011) 385–410.

Pisidia, that is, single provinces, which means that no measures were taken to handle the functions of the *vicarii* in the other provinces of the diocese.[53] Since there is no evidence for the abolition of the *vicarius Thraciae* and since several *vicarii Thraciae* are attested later in the sixth century, this office probably continued throughout the period and the two Anastasian *vicarii* (and subsequent Justinianic *praetor*) were concerned only with the Long Walls.

Once the rebellion started, Vitalian marched from Odessus with 50,000 'soldiers and rural inhabitants' to the Hebdomon, close to Constantinople and inside the recently completed Long Walls.[54] Marcellinus Comes reports 60,000 men and adds that Vitalian came up to the Golden Gate. The Thracian field army was based at Odessus, moved from Marcianopolis perhaps after 447.[55] This was a large force of Roman soldiers and Roman citizens, and though there are no figures for the Thracian field army at this point, Jones' estimates from the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the early fifth century were 24,500 men in the Thracian field army, 16,500 border troops in Scythia, 14,000 in Moesia Secunda. In 478 Malchus notes that the Thracian field army could field 10,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry.[56] Although Vitalian's army included Goths, Huns and Bulgars, this was typical of Roman armies of the period and had nothing to do with any links between Vitalian and the *foederati*. Vitalian's force thus had considerable popular support to reach the numbers reported by John of Antioch and Marcellinus. Moving a force of this size over 450 kilometres from Odessus to the outskirts of Constantinople was only possible using military expertise, since at least fifty tons of grain were needed for every day of the three weeks, at a minimum, that it would have taken to reach the capital.

News of the revolt and the march on the city would, however, have reached Anastasius much faster, giving the emperor plentiful time to assemble troops to confront Vitalian in the field. The core of the forces available to Anastasius was the imperial field army based at the

[53] Justinian, *Novellae constitutiones* 26; useful comments by J. Wiewiorowski, 'Βικάριος Θράκης (Vicarius Thraciae) as the Roman Official of the New Type', *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 4–5 (2013–14) 297–306 at 303–306; for other problems with the administration of the Long Walls under Anastasius, see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 271–74.

[54] B. Croke, 'The Date of the "Anastasian Long Wall" in Thrace', *GRBS* 23 (1982) 59–78, suggests some point between the composition of the panegyrics of Priscian (502/503) and Procopius of Gaza (503/506); cf. J. Crow, 'The Long Walls of Thrace', in C. Mango and G. Dagron (eds.), *Constantinople and Its Hinterland* (Aldershot, 1995) 109–24; J. Crow and A. Ricci, 'Investigating the Hinterland of Constantinople: Interim Report on the Anastasian Long Wall', *JRA* 10 (1997) 235–62; Meier, *Anastasios I.*, 145–46.

[55] E. A. Thompson, *The Huns* (London, 1996) 101.

[56] Malchus fr. 18.2.15 (p. 428 Blockley); Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1434, 1449–50.

Hebdomon, significantly larger than the Thracian field army. During the Nika riot of 532, the *Chronicon Paschale* mentions Justinian calling up troops from the Hebdomon, as well as nearby bases at Regium (Küçük Çekmece), Athyras (Büyük Çekmece) and Calobria (at Silivri). Since Vitalian used the Hebdomon as a base, the imperial army had presumably been moved into the city. Anastasius could also have called on the Illyrian field army (usually based at Thessalonica, about 500 kilometres from Constantinople). The emperor thus had greater military resources at his disposal than Vitalian.[57]

The initial lack of military action suggests that neither Vitalian nor Anastasius wished to fight at this stage. This situation was different from Roman civil wars which generally resulted in rapid confrontation or the flight of one party. Vitalian was certainly not trying to seize the imperial throne. The lack of coins minted in his name is decisive, even though John of Antioch claims that 'everybody expected that he would become emperor'.[58] There are other fifth-century revolts in which the leaders did not claim the purple. Gainas' revolt in 399–400 is now generally seen as the result of rivalries between Arcadius' senior administrators, replacing earlier ethnically motivated theories.[59] When he revolted, Gainas did not declare himself emperor and when defeated in battle, he retired with his army, which still included 'Roman soldiers', to the Danube.[60] On a smaller scale was the revolt of Anagastes in 469 over the nomination of a rival, Jordanes, for the consulate.[61] The cases of Gainas, Anagastes and Vitalian were different from the revolts of Marcian in 479 and Longinus in 491. Both of these men had blood claims to the imperial throne, so it seems likely that if they had been militarily successful they would have been acclaimed emperor. These revolts were similar to the mutiny of 602 caused by Maurice's orders to winter across the Danube; there is no sign that Phocas was considered a candidate for emperor until the mutiny was well under way.[62]

[57] Troops in city: *Codex Theodosianus* 7.8.13, 14; *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 531 (p. 622 Dindorf); Calobria: J. Crow and S. Turner, 'Silivri and the Thracian Hinterland of Istanbul: An Historic Landscape', *AS* 59 (2009) 167–81 at 171.

[58] John of Antioch fr. 311 (p. 538 Roberto) = fr. 242 (pp. 456, 458 Mariev). The only modern author to suggest this is Haarer, *Anastasius*, 179; although Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 157–60 De Boor), claims that the Constantinopolitan crowd acclaimed Vitalian during the *trishagion* riots of 512, this is a confusion with Areobindus; cf. Meier, *Anastasios I.*, 309, on motivation.

[59] J. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops* (Oxford, 1991) 111–25; A. Cameron and J. Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley, 1993) 199–233.

[60] Zosimus 5.22.9; Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 206.

[61] John of Antioch fr. 298 (p. 504 Roberto) = fr. 229 (pp. 416, 418 Mariev).

[62] D. Olster, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century* (Amsterdam, 1993) 49–65.

During a Roman civil war, the struggle over imperial power allowed generals to lead Romans against Romans, though there were frequent desertions and changes of allegiance of officers. It must have been even harder for Gainas and Vitalian to keep the loyalty of their men when they faced imperial armies on the battlefield, and though many of the troops themselves would have had little agency in this sort of situation, their officers did. The size and duration of Vitalian's revolt thus suggests that the cause for which he was fighting was one shared by many members of his army.

Once Vitalian had arrived at Constantinople in 513, negotiations followed, with the emperor being represented by Patricius, one of the two *magistri militum praesentales* (John of Antioch), or by Theodorus (Marcellinus Comes), perhaps the same Theodorus that John of Antioch mentions as 'steward of the imperial treasuries' (that is, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*) a year later. John of Antioch states that Vitalian's grievances were a 'reversal of the injustices caused by the *magister militum per Thracias* and also adherence to the orthodox creed'.[63] Vitalian asked for the reinstatement of Macedonius and Flavianus. Anastasius met some of the rebel leaders himself, though not Vitalian, and promised 'to invite people from the older Rome to settle the matters of faith'.[64] Apparently satisfied with the negotiations, Vitalian withdrew to the Danube.

Up to this point, Anastasius could minimise the result as a demonstration. However, it soon entered a second phase in 514 as Anastasius moved away from conciliation. We do not know if the emperor did consult with Rome following Vitalian's first march on Constantinople, but this seems unlikely given the lack of any evidence in the abundant letters of Pope Hormisdas.[65] Anastasius now appointed Cyrillus as *magister militum per Thracias*, suggesting that he thought he was in control of the situation. Cyrillus is described differently in various sources, though his death at the hands of Vitalian in Odessus is agreed on. Marcellinus Comes' description of Cyrillus is quite negative, John of Antioch's is positive and Malalas includes no colour at all.

After the failure of this attempt to bring the Thracian field army back into obedience, Anastasius turned to military action, sending his nephew Hypatius, Patricius' colleague as *magister militum praesentalis*, against

[63] John of Antioch fr. 311 (p. 536 Roberto) = fr. 242 (p. 454 Mariev). [64] Ibid.
[65] B. Neil, 'Papal Letters and Letter Collections', C. Sogno, B. K. Storin and E. J. Watts (eds.), *Late Antique Letter Collections: A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide* (Oakland, 2017) 449–66; Allen, 'Church and Emperor'.

Vitalian. He commanded 80,000 men according to John of Antioch. This figure probably represents a combination of the imperial army and the Illyrian field army from Thessalonica. When Anastasius combined the praesental field army and the Eastern field army in Mesopotamia in 502, this totalled 52,000 men.[66] Anastasius also appointed another *magister militum per Thracias*, Alathar; presumably Hypatius was instructed to install him in Odessus and return the Thracian army to loyalty to the emperor. Following some initial successes, Hypatius followed Vitalian to Akris, about 65 kilometres east of Odessus. The battle was a disaster for the emperor. Hypatius and Alathar were captured and John of Antioch suggests 60,000 casualties among Hypatius' army. This was a significant defeat and, if John's figures are close to accurate, on the scale of Mursa in 351. Vitalian then advanced to Constantinople a second time, crossing the Long Walls and coming to Laosthenion about 17 kilometres north of the city. As in the previous year, there was no fighting at the city itself, probably because the imperial army was still recovering from its defeat; we know it received a new *magister militum*, John Valeriana.

Although Anastasius could have withstood a siege behind the walls of Constantinople, the problems posed by Vitalian were political, not military. The *trishagion* riots of 512 had shown how easily a Constantinopolitan crowd could acclaim an emperor. Anastasius thus made substantial concessions. Vitalian was appointed as *magister militum per Thracias*, the emperor promised to arrange a Church council at Heraclea, and Hypatius was ransomed following an appeal by his father, Secundinus, Anastasius' brother-in-law.

Unlike the year before, in 514 Anastasius can be seen trying to resolve the religious issues. He wrote to Pope Hormisdas on 28 December 514, announcing a Church council to be held at Heraclea on 1 July 515, about 85 kilometres west of Constantinople.[67] A second letter from the emperor was sent to the pope on 12 January 515.[68] The news of an oecumenical council may have been a bit of a shock to Hormisdas, only in office for six months and perhaps still finding his feet. The vagaries of winter travel meant that the second imperial letter arrived first, reaching Hormisdas on 28 March, two months before the second letter which finally arrived on 14 May.[69] Both letters are preserved in the *Collectio Avellana*. Like many of

[66] Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle* 54 (*CSCO* 91, pp. 280–81).
[67] *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 109. [68] Ibid., *Epistula* 107.
[69] A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411–533* (Cambridge, 2003) 227–30; Neil, 'Papal Letters', 459, suggests that the average travel time was two months.

the letters in the *Collectio*, the first letter has lost its full heading, being simply titled Anastasius to Pope Hormisdas, inviting him to a council in Heraclea on 1 July. The contracted title and the abrupt start to the letter suggests that it has been edited at some point. The second letter has the full imperial title and is more conciliatory in tone, inviting Hormisdas to preside over the council, suggesting some further reflection on the part of Anastasius and his advisers. Invitations went out to the bishops and Theodore Lector reports that two hundred travelled to Constantinople. A letter from Severus of Antioch to the *magister officiorum* Celer mentions him being invited to the council.[70] Hormisdas answered the second imperial letter (the first one he had received) on 4 April, understandably asking for more information.[71] Then, having received the second letter (in his sequence) from Anastasius, he wrote to the emperor on 8 July with details of the embassy that he was sending to Constantinople.[72] This was all too late for the council to function as planned. Without papal involvement, there was no chance of the council resolving Anastasius' political problem with Vitalian. The council thus never happened.[73]

Imperial negotiations with the pope continued, however. Hormisdas' embassy reached Constantinople on 11 August 515, accompanied by detailed instructions (the so-called *indiculus*), a letter to the emperor and a letter (not preserved) to Vitalian. The instructions to the envoys show that Hormisdas was not prepared to share his letter to Vitalian with Anastasius, but also suggest considerable optimism on the part of Hormisdas as to his envoys' ability to control the negotiations.[74] Hormisdas and Anastasius saw these events in different ways. Anastasius was mostly concerned with Vitalian (and perhaps also the Scythian monks), but Hormisdas hoped to use these events to resolve the Acacian schism on his terms by forcing the emperor to accept the Tome of Leo. Hormisdas was also concerned about the bishops of Dacia and Macedonia. After 382, the imperial administration of these provinces lay in the hands of the Eastern empire, but the ecclesiastical administration remained Western, with the bishop of Thessalonica acting as papal *vicarius*. At the beginning of the Acacian schism, these bishops withdrew from communion with Rome, but by the summer of 515, Hormisdas claimed in a letter to Caesarius of Arles that 'almost all the bishops of Dardania, Illyria, and

[70] Severus of Antioch, *Epistulae selectae* 6.1.21 (vol. 1, pp. 81–83 Brooks); Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 160–61 De Boor).
[71] *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 108. [72] Ibid., *Epistula* 110.
[73] J. Speigl, 'Die Synode von Herakleia 515', *AHC* 12 (1980) 47–61.
[74] *Indiculus* = *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 116. Letter to Anastasius = *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 115.

Scythia' were taking communion with Rome.[75] This change of position may have been the result of Vitalian's success.[76]

By the late summer of 515 it was clear to Vitalian that there would be no council. He returned to Constantinople for a third time, again crossing the Long Walls but now came to Sycae across the Golden Horn; his camp fires could probably be seen from the imperial palace. Anastasius had run out of diplomatic options so had to fight; as in other Roman civil wars, failure to take the offensive would be seen as weakness. According to Malalas, the two *magistri militum praesentales*, John and Patricius, who commanded the imperial field army, were reluctant to take the field, fearing that if they were defeated their friendship with Vitalian would be used against them. Anastasius' land forces were placed under the command of Rufinus, the recently appointed *magister militum per Thracias*, while Marinus, the Eastern praetorian prefect and not known to have had any military experience, was assigned command of the naval forces.[77]

Marinus defeated Vitalian's fleet in a sea battle which was then followed by some fighting on land at Sycae. John of Antioch and Malalas provide different versions of the sea battle. In the Malalas tradition, Proclus the philosopher (from Athens, not to be confused with the more famous Lycian philosopher of the same name who had died in 485) helped Marinus by providing him with θεῖον ἄπυρον (unsmelted or pure, that is, elemental, sulphur).[78] This is not the later Byzantine incendiary weapon usually referred to as 'Greek fire' which is petroleum-based.[79] Proclus claimed that after the elemental sulphur was ground into powder, it could be thrown against a ship or building where it would burst into flames. Elemental sulphur in a powdered form is prone to combustion, but the difficulty of delivering this highly unstable substance to enemy ships suggests that it would have been as dangerous to any attackers as to the targets.[80] John of Antioch records land and naval combat, but has no

[75] Hormisdas, *Epistulae* 9 (pp. 758–61 Thiel).

[76] D. Moreau, 'Les moines scythes néo-chalcédoniens (de Zaldapa?): étude préliminaire à une prosopographie chrétienne du Diocèse des Thraces', *Добруджа* 32 (2017) 187–202.

[77] For command by non-soldiers, see H. W. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe* (Oxford, 1996) 240.

[78] Malalas, *Chronographia* 16.16 (pp. 330–31 Thurn) 403; Malalas fr. 41 = Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta de insidiis* (pp. 169–70 De Boor); John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 89.78–84 (trans. Charles, *Chronicle of John*, 130–31); Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum* 14.3.29–30 (vol. 2, p. 261 Dindorf).

[79] J. F. Haldon, '"Greek Fire" Revisited: Recent and Current Research', in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Byzantine Style, Religion, and Civilization: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Cambridge, 2006) 290–325, updating J. F. Haldon and M. Byrne, 'A Possible Solution to the Problem of Greek Fire', *ByzZ* 70 (1977) 91–99; cf. Meier, *Anastasios I.*, 307, who is sceptical: 'Wunderwaffe'.

[80] See Material Safety Data Sheet for sulphur, e.g. www.sultran.com/Documents/Firepackage.pdf.

indication of the size of the forces involved. He mentions the future Emperor Justin I capturing one of Vitalian's ships, but says nothing about Marinus or incendiary weapons.

After these defeats on sea and land, Vitalian retired. John of Antioch's account breaks off at this point, but Malalas records that he went to Anchialus, about 275 kilometres north-west of Constantinople. There is no further record of Vitalian in the primary sources for the remaining two years of Anastasius' reign. He appears to have been prepared to wait, knowing that Anastasius continued to attempt to settle the schism by sending the *comes domesticorum* Theopompus to Rome in July 516.[81] And he was probably aware that Anastasius was in his eighties. Anastasius by his continued diplomacy was also signalling a lack of interest in pursuing Vitalian militarily.

Although Vitalian is not mentioned for the remainder of Anastasius' reign, he reappeared at the beginning of the reign of Justin I (518–27). One of Justin's first actions was to end the Acacian schism (though making political concessions to the pope did not resolve any of the theological issues provoked by Chalcedon). Now that Vitalian's objections to the emperor's religious policy were removed, he could be rehabilitated. He was appointed as *magister militum praesentalis* in 518 and nominated as consul for 520. But this rehabilitation was probably quite tentative, since he had led an army against the previous emperor less than five years earlier. While clemency was sometimes granted by the victors to defeated opponents of the Roman state, it rarely came with the command of troops. Although Vitalian entered 520 as consul, he did not survive the year, being murdered in the summer, allegedly by Justinian. Given the casualties in his campaigns, it was probably easy to find men with a grudge against him.[82]

Reframing the Historical Record

Although the revolt is well documented, there are significant differences between the various source traditions. Only John of Antioch and Malalas include the final sea battle, which is omitted in Marcellinus Comes and Theodore Lector. Since both Marcellinus and Theodore were well-informed local contemporaries and since Marcellinus' work is complete, we need to explain this arrangement of the primary sources. From the emperor's perspective, it would be best not to encourage others to take up

[81] *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 111.
[82] A. Cameron, 'The Death of Vitalian (520 AD)', *ZPE* 48 (1982) 93–94.

arms in defence of their interpretation of Chalcedon. Vitalian could be vilified for rebelling against the empire, but the causes of his revolt needed to be downplayed. When telling the story in Anastasius' reign, a rebel had been defeated and orthodoxy defended. Thus an epigram in the *Greek Anthology* which mentions the sea battle in positive terms probably dates from Anastasius' reign.[83] This all changed in 518 with the resolution of the Acacian schism and the rehabilitation of Vitalian. The sea battle was now a defeat of the supporters of Chalcedon, an awkward moment best forgotten. Although Justin I himself had participated in the sea battle, the sources for his military career focus on the Isaurian and Persian wars. The Battle of Akris was equally awkward, a triumph for Chalcedon, but by a rebel rather than the legitimate emperor. The official line then was to say as little as possible about these events, a tradition reflected most strongly by Marcellinus Comes.

Conclusion

Vitalian fought for Chalcedon, attempting to use force to change the empire's theology. This was an option open to many generals in the fifth and sixth centuries, but one not taken by others. Given the risks in rebelling and challenging the emperor by force, these actions would only be undertaken by a certain sort of wilful personality, one that would often be weeded out during the process of promoting military officers. As well as the risks and lack of suitable candidates, the political stability of the Roman empire in the East in the fifth and sixth centuries made it difficult to challenge the emperor. This environment was different from the West in the fourth and fifth centuries. Religious belief mattered greatly, but for soldiers it was in competition with their duty of obedience to the emperor and their officers. Understanding what made Vitalian unique is more difficult. Since many generals were in similar situations and did not act in the same way, the best explanation is his personality, though this is unsatisfying as an argument from silence.

Vitalian marched on Constantinople three times and fought two large battles, yet almost disappeared from history, whereas Attila the Hun, though no more successful, is a household name. Vitalian's actions were soon overtaken by events, with Justin I's resolution of the Acacian schism making the revolt mostly a curiosity, and following the murder of Vitalian, a curiosity best forgotten. A couple of decades later, following the Nika riot

[83] *Anthologia Graeca* 15.50.

and the creation of a separate anti-Chalcedonian Church, it may all have seemed to be of academic interest, though this may have been no consolation to those who fell or lost loved ones in the battles in Thrace and at Constantinople. Vitalian was fighting for Chalcedon, but no one wanted to remember this.

CHAPTER 17

*The Emperor, the People and Urban Violence in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries**

Geoffrey Greatrex

Introduction

There are many reasons for returning to a field in which I was involved twenty years ago, when I brought out a detailed analysis of the Nika riot. Given the theme of this volume, however, it would be of little relevance to focus too narrowly on the events of January 532.[1] Instead, I propose to examine at a more general level the dynamics of riots in the fifth and sixth centuries, seeking in particular to discern what factors were involved, and more particularly to what extent religious or doctrinal loyalties played a part, and what the consequences of the developments over this period were. I shall start with a brief survey of how approaches to factions and violence have changed in recent scholarship; one of the key themes here will be the blurring of lines between factional and religious violence, as scholars have underlined the numerous common traits of factions and the Church, both of which constituted powerful empire-wide organisations with their own objectives and interests.[2]

It will emerge from this chapter that imperial power found itself steadily eroded over the fifth and sixth centuries by its sedentary nature in Constantinople; I shall focus for the most part on the Eastern capital. If, as Tacitus asserts,[3] the events of 69 CE demonstrated that emperors could be made outside Rome, those of our period illustrated precisely the reverse:

* I am grateful to Robin Whelan and Philip Wood for comments on an earlier draft of this chapter, as also to Peter Van Nuffelen for subsequent remarks.

[1] The riot has also been the subject of detailed discussions subsequently, most notably recently by R. Pfeilschifter, *Der Kaiser und Konstantinopel* (Berlin, 2013) 179–210; cf. H. Leppin, *Justinian: Das christliche Experiment* (Stuttgart, 2011) 142–48; S. Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2015) 143–48. Note also the conspiracy theory version of the riot, according to which it was deliberately provoked by Justinian, put forward by M. Meier, 'Die Inszenierung einer Katastrophe: Justinian und der Nika-Aufstand', *ZPE* 142 (2003) 273–300, with the brief rebuttal by A. Hasse-Ungeheuer, *Das Mönchtum in der Religionspolitik Kaiser Justinians I.* (Berlin, 2016) 227–28.

[2] See also Dijkstra, this volume, pp. 286–87.

[3] Tacitus, *Histories* 1.4.

because of the powerful walls erected at the start of the fifth century, as Rene Pfeilschifter has argued so convincingly, emperors were now reliant on other groups, situated in the city, to maintain their position. I shall discuss briefly the reasons for this remarkable evolution in imperial power; the recent work of Pfeilschifter and Anthony Kaldellis has already covered this ground sufficiently.[4] I shall concentrate rather on the consequences for public order and stability. As will emerge, every emperor had to perform a delicate balancing act to remain in power; Pfeilschifter, building on the work of Egon Flaig, characterises this effort as a bid to secure *Akzeptanz*, that is, the support of the interested parties, be they the people, the factions, the Church or the nobility. While Pfeilschifter remains quite sanguine about the power of the emperor to retain the upper hand in this power struggle, I shall argue that the need to placate specific interest groups, in particular Church leaders and the factions, gravely undermined his position. The outbreak of significant riots, reaching a climax in the early seventh century, was the result of this precariousness and an inability to rein in dangerous tendencies.

Urban Violence, the Factions and the Church: Recent Research

Such is the bibliography that has accumulated in the past twenty years that it is impossible to do more than scratch the surface of this extensive work. I shall not aim therefore at providing an exhaustive analysis, but seek instead to draw out some of the more important threads to emerge.

First, the minimalist interpretation of Alan Cameron, seeing in the factions' riots the indulgence of their 'petty and pointless rivalries', is increasingly challenged.[5] Phil Booth, for instance, through a detailed examination of the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, has admirably brought out the degree to which Blues and Greens were committed to Heraclius and Phocas respectively. He argues, furthermore, that the prominence of

[4] Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*; A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2015).

[5] A. Cameron, *Circus Factions* (Oxford, 1976) 291. Cf. M. Whitby, 'The Violence of the Circus Factions', in K. Hopwood (ed.), *Organised Crime in Antiquity* (London, 1999) 229–53 at 230–32, and Whitby, 'Factions, Bishops, Violence and Urban Decline', in J.-U. Krause and C. Witschel (eds.), *Die Stadt in der Spätantike: Niedergang oder Wandel?* (Stuttgart, 2006) 441–61 at 412; P. Bell, *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation* (Oxford, 2013) 143–45. See also M. Meier, *Anastasios I.: Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 2009) 153–54; R. Main, *Mob Politics: The Political Influence of the Circus Factions in the Eastern Empire from the Reign of Leo I to Heraclius (457–641)* (unpublished MA thesis; Ottawa, 2013) 5–22; A. Puk, *Das römische Spielewesen in der Spätantike* (Berlin, 2014) 85–160.

the factions throughout the sixth century may well be connected to the instability of the succession; riots and disturbances were more likely when the succession was in doubt, for instance towards the end of Justinian's reign. The establishment of the Heraclian dynasty marked a notable decline in urban violence.[6]

Second, Peter Van Nuffelen has argued for alternative approaches to popular violence, suggesting that we attempt to understand them on their own terms. He insists on the moral dimension of disturbances, often aimed at righting perceived injustices. As he illustrates, crowds might imitate or mock rituals or processions in their efforts to signal their discontent. He is undoubtedly right to highlight the importance of gestures and communication, for instance between people and emperor in the hippodrome.[7] He further draws attention to the personalisation of power, whether in the case of the emperor himself or that of other powerful figures, celebrated in the increasing use of acclamations.[8] Despite his scepticism about some modern approaches, however, some insights can be gained from them, as the recent work of Peter Bell and Daniëlle Slootjes shows. The latter insists on the heterogeneous nature of the crowds that gathered, whether at Rome or Constantinople; she distinguishes, for instance, between active and passive elements, and likewise between organised and spontaneous disturbances.[9]

Third, in my paper of 1997 I offered a typology of riots derived in large measure from earlier studies, notably that of Alan Cameron. Jens-Uwe

[6] P. Booth, 'Shades of Blues and Greens in the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiou', *ByzZ* 104 (2011) 555–601; cf. W. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford, 2001) 269–76; G. Dagron, *L'hippodrome de Constantinople: jeux, peuple et politique* (Paris, 2011) 184.

[7] See P. Van Nuffelen, '"A Wise Madness": A Virtue-Based Model for Crowd Behaviour in Late Antiquity', in W. Mayer and C. L. de Wet (eds.), *Reconceiving Religious Conflict: New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity* (London, 2018) 234–58; cf. P. Van Nuffelen, 'The Late Antique State and "Mirror Rituals": Procopius of Caesarea on Rebellions in North Africa', in D. Brodka and M. Stachura (eds.), *Continuity and Change: Studies in Late Antique Historiography* (Cracow, 2007) 61–72, and 'Playing the Ritual Game in Constantinople (379–457)', in L. Grig and G. Kelly (eds.), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2012) 183–200; Puk, *Römische Spielewesen*, 321–25. R. MacMullen, 'The Historical Role of the Masses in Late Antiquity', in his *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary* (Princeton, 1990) 250–76 at 252, 272–73, makes similar points. See also Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 28–38.

[8] P. Van Nuffelen, 'Beyond Bureaucracy: Ritual Mediation in Late Antiquity', in M. Kitts et al. (eds.), *State, Power and Violence* (Wiesbaden, 2010) 231–46; cf. J.C. Magalhães de Oliveira, *Potestas Populi: participation populaire et action collective dans les villes de l'Afrique romaine (vers 300–430 apr. J.-C.)* (Turnhout, 2012) 247–48; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 290–91.

[9] Bell, *Social Conflict*; see my review in *CR* 64 (2014) 256–58; D. Slootjes, 'Crowd Behavior in Late Antique Rome', in M. R. Salzman, M. Sághy and R. Lizzi Testa (eds.), *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge, 2015) 178–94, esp. pp. 182–83; see also Chapter 12 by Dijkstra, this volume, on Alexandria.

Krause, in his recent monograph on criminality in Late Antiquity, furnishes a similar analysis. The tendency is to distinguish three broad types of disturbance. There are religious/doctrinal riots, whether against pagans, heretics or Jews; there are battles between opposing factions; and there are more coordinated protests against the government, often as a result of food shortages.[10] Yet whether one ought to draw hard and fast distinctions between these types of disturbance is doubtful. Peter Hatlie argues that there were notable similarities between the factions and the monks involved in violence, both comprising important groups of young men who were not averse to taking direct action when the occasion arose.[11] There is no need to suppose that there were not cross-overs between the two groups. It was members of the Green faction who took the lead under Zeno in attacking Jews in Antioch, for instance, while around 515 Blue partisans were involved in an assault on an anti-Chalcedonian monastery near Apamea.[12] Almost simultaneously, in 515/16, a shortage of olive oil led to disturbances in Alexandria, in which the factions were involved, leading to the murder of the prefect Theodosius; although our sources are sketchy, it appears that discontent with the newly appointed Patriarch Dioscorus was also a factor.[13] While already in 1997 I had noted that doctrinal riots might lead to demonstrations in the hippodrome, I had (incorrectly) asserted that this type of disturbance disappears with the accession of Chalcedonian emperors in 518. In fact, it is possible to continue to trace currents of religious discontent in the capital, on occasion

[10] G. Greatrex, 'The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal', *JHS* 117 (1997) 60–86 at 64; cf. Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 271; J.-U. Krause, *Gewalt und Kriminalität in der Spätantike* (Munich, 2014) 79.

[11] P. Hatlie, 'Monks and Circus Factions in Early Byzantine Political Life', in M. Kaplan (ed.) *Monastères, images, pouvoirs et société à Byzance* (Paris, 2006) 13–25. Cf. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 119–210, esp. pp. 185–91, noting the fondness for slogans of both groups, with Hasse-Ungeheuer, *Mönchtum*, 193–229, 342. The two partisans saved from hanging just before the Nika riot by the breaking of the rope were rescued by monks, as Hatlie, 'Monks and Circus Factions', 15, observes; see further Hasse-Ungeheuer, *Mönchtum*, 223–27. Cf. I. Rochow, 'Die Heidenprozesse unter den Kaisern Tiberios II. Konstantinos und Maurikios', in H. Köpstein and F. Winkelmann (eds.), *Studien zum 7. Jahrhundert in Byzanz: Probleme der Herausbildung des Feudalismus* (Berlin, 1976) 120–30 at 130, noting that a bout of persecution of anti-Chalcedonians in 581/82 was probably linked to a food shortage at the same time. The factions were also involved in protests at bread shortages in 556: see Malalas, *Chronographia* 18.121 (p. 418 Thurn).

[12] Hatlie, 'Monks and Circus Factions', 16, citing Malalas, *Chronographia* 15.16 (pp. 317–18 Thurn) for the first case; cf. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 259; Whitby, 'Factions', 444 for the second, based on *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 3.96.19–24.

[13] Maximian of Ravenna, *Chronica*, fr. 2 (pp. 263–67 Van Hoof); Malalas, *Chronographia* 16.15 (pp. 328–29 Thurn); Theophanes, *Chronographia* (pp. 162–63 De Boor); cf. W. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972) 73; Whitby, 'Factions', 444; Meier, *Anastasios I.*, 166.

provoking demonstrations, as in 533.[14] Although it would clearly be wrong to revert to views that sought to identify one faction with one Church doctrine, one must equally not impose unduly categorical divisions.[15]

Fourth, on a more general level, debate continues as to the nature of Late Antique society itself, in particular, for our concerns, the degree to which it was violent and intolerant. Opinions differ widely, as has been noted; the issue remains intractable.[16] Two points need to be made here. First, conditions must have varied enormously, both between city and village and between some cities and others. If we think, for instance, of Palestine, then we might contrast the bustling but tense streets of Caesarea, scene of fighting between supporters and adversaries of Chalcedon in the 450s and between Samaritans and Romans in the 550s, and the more tranquil atmosphere that appears to have reigned just along the coast at Gaza.[17] Similar variations apply over time: Constantinople was notably

[14] See J. H. F. Dijkstra and G. Greatrex, 'Patriarchs and Politics in Constantinople in the Reign of Anastasius (with a Reedition of *O. Mon. Epiph.* 59)', *Millennium* 6 (2009) 223–64 at 259–60, from Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 9.22–23 (vol. 4, pp. 281–86 Chabot); cf. Leppin, *Justinian*, 182–83; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 203–204. See also Hatlie, 'Monks and Circus Factions', 19; cf. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 255–56, suggesting that demonstrations against pagans in Constantinople in the 570s and 580s may be linked to simmering anti-Chalcedonian sentiment.

[15] As Whitby, 'Factions', 444, points out, factions could also take up popular causes, thus blending another two types of riot. They should probably be distinguished nonetheless from the ordinary citizens, although C. Zuckerman, 'Le cirque, l'argent et le peuple: à propos d'une inscription du Bas-Empire', *REByz* 58 (2000) 69–96, argues that the Greek term δημότης should be taken as referring to a citizen, rather than an actual partisan, thus challenging this frequently made distinction.

[16] B. Caseau, 'Christianisation et violence religieuse: le débat historiographique', in M. Baslez (ed.), *Chrétiens persécuteurs: destructions, exclusions, violences religieuses au IV^e siècle* (Paris, 2014) 11–36; the General Introduction, pp. 2–6, and Chapter 10 by Mayer, this volume; cf. M. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ': Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2006) 11–12. MacMullen, 'Historical Role of the Masses', 266, supposes a high level of violence; cf. R. MacMullen, 'Cultural and Political Changes in the 4th and 5th Centuries', *Historia* 52 (2003) 465–95 at 484–95; Oliveira de Magalhães, *Potestas Populi*, 21–22; *contra*, N. McLynn, 'Christian Controversy and Violence in the Fourth Century', *Kodai* 3 (1992) 15–44. See also H. Inglebert, 'Les historiens et les clairs-obscurs de l'Antiquité tardive', in S. Ratti (ed.) *Une Antiquité tardive noire ou heureuse?* (Besançon, 2015) 48–51 for some interesting reflections on this issue. See now H. Leppin, 'Le christianisme et la découverte de la liberté religieuse', in T. Itgenhorst and P. Le Doze (eds.), *La norme sous la République romaine et le Haut-Empire: élaboration, diffusion et contournements* (Bordeaux, 2017) 217–40; P. Van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance durant l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2018) 6–19. Krause, *Gewalt*, 26, argues that levels of violence were less than in other pre-industrial societies. The applicability of modern notions of tolerance to the Roman context has been persuasively challenged by (among others) S. Larson, 'The Trouble with Religious Tolerance in Roman Antiquity', in J. D. Rosenblum, L. Vuong and N. DesRosiers (eds.), *Religious Competition in the Third Century CE: Jews, Christians, and the Greco-Roman World* (Göttingen, 2014) 50–59.

[17] See E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire. Tome II: de la disparition de l'empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–565)* (Paris, 1949) 373–74; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 148–49; G. Greatrex, 'L'historien Procope et la vie à Césarée au VI^e s.', in G. Greatrex and S. Janniard (eds.),

calm in the years after the Nika riot compared with the first decades of the sixth century. Second, and crucially for our analysis below, the emergence of competing foci of loyalty and sources of patronage and wealth boded ill for minorities and dissidents. As we shall see, Church leaders in particular could bring considerable pressure to bear on emperors in order to further their interests – often at the expense of their rivals and enemies; the classic example of this is Ambrose's insistence to Theodosius I that the Christians of Callinicum not be obliged to rebuild the synagogue they had destroyed.[18]

The Causes of the Weakening of the Emperor's Position

In both this section and the next, the increasing prominence of the Church will occupy a central role. But it is important to note other factors too, all of which converged to reduce the emperor's room for manoeuvre. As the next section will show, the result of this tendency was a perceptible increase in violence, partly the work of interested parties to further their interests, and partly the fruit of the desperate efforts of the imperial authorities to maintain control.

The demilitarisation of the imperial office after Theodosius I, coupled with the consistent residency of emperors in Constantinople, brought about a shift in the balance of power.[19] Parties present in the capital now enjoyed a greater prominence, in particular the people and the Church. Neither group, of course, is monolithic: the factions, for instance, account probably for only a small element among 'the people', nor should

Le monde de Procope/ The World of Procopius (Paris, 2018) 15–38 at 19–24; cf. M. Champion, *Explaining the Cosmos: Creation and Cultural Interaction in Late-Antique Gaza* (Oxford, 2014) 21–42.

[18] Cf. MacMullen, 'Historical Role of the Masses', 275; cf. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 20–22, 321–22, 339–40; U. Gotter, 'Zwischen Christentum und Staatsraison: Römisches Imperium und religiöse Gewalt', in J. Hahn (ed.), *Spätantiker Staat und religiöser Konflikt: imperiale und lokale Verwaltung und die Gewalt gegen Heiligtümer* (Berlin, 2011) 133–58 at 145–47. The point is well made by E. Soler, 'Les violences chrétiennes contre les synagogues dans l'Empire romain, pendant le conflit entre Théodose et l'usurpateur Maxime (386–388 apr. J.-C.)', *Semitica et Classica* 4 (2011) 89–98 at 92, 98; cf. Krause, *Gewalt*, 91: 'Die Strafpraxis kontrastiert aufs schärfste mit der Rechtslage', discussing the generous treatment of the plunderers of the Serapeum and the murderers of Bishop George of Cappadocia in Alexandria (under Julian). See further n. 32 below.

[19] A theme of Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*; cf. already W. Liebeschuetz's review of Cameron, *Circus Factions*, in *JRS* 78 (1988) 198. See also now M. Meier, 'Der Monarch auf der Suche nach seinem Platz', in S. Rebenich (ed.), *Monarchische Herrschaft im Altertum* (Berlin, 2017) 509–44 at 513–15. It does not appear that emperors in the high empire were subject to such significant constraints, even if many were largely sedentary, although things changed by the third century. See e.g. F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1977); M. Kulikowski, *The Triumph of Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2017) 166–67.

it be assumed that rioters belonged primarily to the poorest elements in society.[20] On a sheer scale of numbers, it is obvious that these elements far eclipsed the emperor and his retinue. Although emperors could generally count on units of excubitors and other guards to bolster their position, the troops were ill equipped to handle street fighting and riots; moreover, their deployment might easily escalate an already delicate situation.[21] It is not surprising therefore that emperors frequently sought to defuse tensions by negotiation, by concessions – such as the sacking of unpopular officials – and even by recognised gestures of humility, as when Anastasius appeared in the hippodrome without his crown in 512.[22]

Not only was the emperor's position in the capital somewhat precarious, but his grip on the empire itself was also tenuous. Even if his image was circulated throughout the provinces and he was acclaimed at public occasions around the empire, he had to rely on his officials and bureaucrats to keep him apprised of events. As Christopher Kelly has shown, the scope for corruption and deception was huge; occasional purges of high-ranking officials might re-establish imperial control but hardly sufficed to redress the overall balance. Even Justinian struggled to impose his will in the provinces.[23] Yet at the same time the emperor had become the focus of expectations on all sides, expectations that could hardly all be met. Before

[20] Cf. e.g. Greatrex, 'Nika Riot', 62; Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 294–306; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 126, 348; Krause, *Gewalt*, 80–82; Slootjes, 'Crowd Behavior', 185. Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 298–99 is right to insist that the people not be perceived as a passive element in contrast to the more active factions: they had a critical role in politics in the capital; cf. Magalhães de Oliveira, *Potestas Populi*, 29–41; Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 118–22 (for this period). The same applies to the Church, which on occasion struggled to contain the activities of monks, see T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, 2009) 140–43; Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 316–18.

[21] These points are discussed in detail by Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 232–51; cf. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 20; Krause, *Gewalt*, 92.

[22] Justinian's sacking of three officials in 532 is an obvious example, but even Constantine had acceded to popular demands and executed Sopater, cf. Greatrex, 'Nika Riot', 81. Anastasius: F. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (Cambridge, 2006) 156–57; Meier, *Anastasios I.*, 269–88, esp. p. 276; and Elton, this volume p. 371; cf. Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 348–49. Van Nuffelen is right to draw attention to the symbolic language of the communication between ruler and crowd, e.g. in his 'Wise Madness', 241–42; cf. Van Nuffelen, 'Playing the Ritual Game', 186–93.

[23] C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2004) 186–231; cf. P. Sarris, *Economy and Society in the Reign of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2006) 2–3; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 99–108; G. Greatrex, 'Government and Mechanisms of Control, East and West', in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila* (Cambridge, 2014) 26–43 at 33–35; Puk, *Römische Spielewesen*, 172–80. There is not space here to explore the related topic of the degree to which emperors were constrained in their dealings with the nobility, but this has been ably explored by H. Börm, 'Herrscher und Eliten in der Spätantike', in H. Börm and J. Wiesehöfer (eds.), *Commutatio et Contentio: Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian, and Early Islamic Near East in Memory of Zeev Rubin* (Düsseldorf, 2010) 159–98; cf. Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 452–74.

we focus on those of Christian groups, we might note in passing those of the oppressed taxpayers: rich and poor alike looked to the emperor for relief. The declarations of Valentinian III illustrate the heaviness of this burden, for the young emperor clearly articulates how the generosity of his predecessors has left him in an untenable position. There is a dreadful paradox in the coincidence of increasing demands on the emperor and diminishing resources.[24]

A significant new constraint in Late Antiquity was imposed by the emergence of Christianity. As others, such as Polymnia Athanassiadi, have noted, the harnessing of state power to impose religious consensus starts already in the third century; the initial victims were the Christians.[25] Once Christianity's place was assured, the power and influence of eminent Churchmen increased, and as the empire's population was steadily Christianised, pressure from holy men, monks or bishops carried more weight. The Roman state had always sought to ensure the security and safety of the empire, but with rare exceptions this had impinged little on the religious domain. Now, however, emperors found themselves sucked into doctrinal issues and efforts to ensure the orthodoxy of the entire population. Bishops and others lobbied aggressively to attain their ends, for instance in the celebrated case of Porphyry's attempt to close the Marneion at Gaza; despite Arcadius' reluctance to intervene, astute planning by those involved obliged him to accede to the bishop's request.[26] The ramifications of this will be explored further below. For the moment, it is worth underlining how, as noted above, Ambrose was able to induce Theodosius to back down in the affair of the synagogue at Callinicum, whatever the flaws in his argumentation. In the same way, the efforts of the Patriarch Acacius and Daniel the Stylite, together with the people of Constantinople,

[24] This theme is explored further in Greatrex, 'Government', 29–33. Note also Justin II's declaration in Justinian, *Novellae constitutiones* 149.2, cited by D. Feissel, 'L'empereur et l'administration impériale', in C. Morrisson (ed.), *Le monde byzantin. Tome 1: l'empire romain d'Orient* (Paris, 2004) 79–110 at 81. See further Bell, *Social Conflict*, 85, 275–77 (a good analysis of Justinian's vulnerability); Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 55–57. The importance of petitions to the emperor is well elucidated by Van Nuffelen, 'Beyond Bureaucracy', 234–38; cf. Whitby, 'Violence', 236.

[25] P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2010) 43–70; cf. e.g. Larson, 'Trouble', 55–56. Kulikowski, *Triumph of Empire*, 152–53, 200, 238, makes a similar point. B. Shaw, 'State Intervention and Holy Violence: Timgad/Palaeostrovsk/Waco', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77 (2009) 853–94, offers an interesting comparative approach.

[26] See Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 92–93, 433 for a detailed discussion; cf. Van Nuffelen, 'Beyond Bureaucracy', 237–38. Even if the work was produced as late as the sixth century, as T. D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen, 2010) 267–83 argues (see also Bremmer, this volume, pp. 62–66), the portrayal of events and attitudes remains relevant.

helped ensure the downfall of the usurper Basiliscus in 476.[27] Yet more tangible signs of the impact of this shift in society may be found in the cries of the crowd. In 491 the people acclaimed Zeno's widow, Ariadne, in the hippodrome, saluting her and demanding 'An orthodox emperor for the empire!' Upon Anastasius' death, in 518, they returned to this theme, forcing the Patriarch John to declare his adherence to Chalcedon.[28]

The growth of these two entities, the Church and the factions, need not necessarily have been to the detriment of imperial power. Some have suggested that their networks could have provided a mechanism for patronage, thus strengthening ties between further-flung regions and the capital; the central government does appear to have assumed increasing responsibility for entertainment throughout the empire, as is attested, for instance, by Justinianic legislation on Egypt. Factions in the provinces might therefore signal their support for the emperor – or a rival – on monuments; thus in the early seventh century, bitter strife resulted in numerous cities. It is just as likely, however, that these organisations actually promoted alternative foci of loyalty, be they bishops or local patrons, further limiting the power of the emperor.[29] Justinian was a long-standing patron of the Blues, who were able therefore to act almost with impunity during the reign of Justin I, but it is significant that he lost their support during the Nika riot; he was also embarrassed by their behaviour in the 550s in the hippodrome, when a Persian ambassador was present. Here again, it may be that the role of patron placed as many burdens on the patron as on his clients, requiring him, for instance, to bend the rules in the Blues' favour when called upon.[30]

[27] On Callinicum see n. 18 above. H. Drake, 'Intolerance, Religious Violence, and Political Legitimacy in Late Antiquity', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79 (2011) 193–235, is an excellent analysis of the emperor's vulnerability, see esp. pp. 198, 213–14, and n. 32 below. On the downfall of Basiliscus, see Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 573–81. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 203–205, makes similar points about Justinian's attempts to bolster his position in 533.

[28] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis* 1.92 (p. 418 Reiske, with trans. in A. Moffatt and M. Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogennetos, the Book of Ceremonies*, vol. 1 [Canberra, 2012] 418); *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 3.71–76, on which see A. Vasiliev, *Justin I* (Washington, 1950) 136–48. Cf. Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 417–19; Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 106–08; Meier, 'Monarch', 529. V. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (Oxford, 2008) 18–30, argues that these demonstrations were sufficient to persuade Justin to adopt the Chalcedonian line; more likely, however, he was already a supporter of the council.

[29] Whitby, 'Factions', 459; cf. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 154–57, for the issue of patronage, but cf. Van Nuffelen, 'Beyond Bureaucracy', 234. On inscriptions of factional loyalty, see C. Roueché, 'Spectacles in Late Antiquity: Some Observations', *AntTard* 15 (2007) 59–64 at 63–64.

[30] On Justinian and the Blues, see Whitby, 'Violence', 229–30, 242–43, and 'Factions', 445; Dagron, *Hippodrome*, 157–70; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 158–60, with Procopius, *Secret History* 7.9; Malalas,

The emperor was thus increasingly subject to a number of new forces, the consequence of his definitive establishment in Constantinople and the construction of the powerful city walls that stood in the way of any provincial rival. Free of the grip of the regional armies, he was now vulnerable to no less powerful pressure from the city's inhabitants and the leaders of the Church. Although their power was 'softer' than that of the armies, relying to a considerable extent on public opinion, shared values and expectations, there was always the chance that they would take more concrete steps to assert their will. Under these circumstances, it should not occasion surprise that imperial policy found itself increasingly circumscribed in many fields.

The Consequences of the Weakening of the Emperor's Position

It might have seemed at one point as though the adoption of Christianity could provide a solid, unifying foundation for the empire, offering a focus of loyalty for its inhabitants; under Constantine, Eusebius could envisage the emperor as the vice-gerent of God on earth, his power evidently secured by the new religion.[31] But instead the new religion, with its burgeoning hierarchy and ample resources, took on an ever greater role in the running of the empire, impinging on almost every aspect of imperial administration. This steady integration of Church and state was buttressed by the deft rhetoric of ecclesiastical leaders, who played on the connection

Chronographia 18.121 (p. 418 Thurn); cf. Main, *Mob Politics*, 16. The emperor, perhaps aware of the problem of his obligations, tried to renounce his patronage when he became sole ruler, cf. Greatrex, 'Nika Riot', 66–67. John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 90.17–19 (trans. R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* [Oxford, 1916] 134–35), cf. Procopius, *Secret History* 9.37–42, refers to popular discontent with Justin and Justinian because of the licence accorded the Blues; as Van Nuffelen argues, 'Wise Madness', 237–39, justice was expected of the emperor. See further Krause, *Gewalt*, 159–60; G. Greatrex, 'Malalas and Procopius', in M. Meier, C. Radtki and F. Schulz (eds.), *Die Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas: Autor, Werk, Überlieferung* (Stuttgart, 2016) 169–185 at 172. The Malthanes affair, reported by Procopius, *Secret History* 29, illustrates the pressure the Blues of Cilicia could bring to bear on the emperor through their allies in Constantinople; cf. Dagron, *Hippodrome*; Main, *Mob Politics*, 18–19. See further n. 47 below. It is worth noting that John the Cappadocian acted as patron of the Greens, according to John the Lydian, *De magistratibus* 3.62 (vol. 2, pp. 120–21 Dubuisson and Schamp).

[31] See G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre: étude sur le 'césaropapisme' byzantin* (Paris, 1995) 141–68; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 252–58; cf. J.-M. Carrié and A. Rousselle, *L'Empire romain en mutation: des Sévères à Constantin, 192–337* (Paris, 1999) 731, on the appeal of universalism, even if, as they note, divisions within the Church soon counteracted this; so also A. D. Lee, *From Rome to Byzantium, AD 363 to 565* (Edinburgh, 2013) 158; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 247, 343–44. Cf. Gotter, 'Zwischen Christentum und Staatsraison', 148, noting this paradox.

between state security and doctrinal orthodoxy.[32] The impact of this development is what concerns us here. I shall argue that the Church and, to a lesser degree, the people wrested the initiative from the emperor, imposing their own agendas on policy and thwarting the implementation of imperial measures. Faced with an imposing array of powerful interest groups and actors, successive emperors found themselves obliged not merely to adjust some policies, but even to initiate or renounce others. Violence was not infrequently involved, but it might be perpetrated by either party. In other words, despite the theoretical scope of the emperor's powers, he was to a significant degree eclipsed by other forces.[33]

An excellent illustration of this phenomenon is furnished by the interaction of Tiberius II with the people of Constantinople in 578. Because he had recruited Gothic forces to prosecute the Persian war, their families, left behind in the city, had asked to be granted a church for their Arian services. Although he had temporised, his neutral reply led to protests throughout the city and accusations of subscribing to the Arian heresy himself. Tiberius summoned Church leaders and berated them, but at the same time he instigated a persecution of Arians and other heretics. Many were arrested who were probably innocent of the charges, but escaped only by paying bribes.[34] In this case, it appears as though the people of

[32] See e.g. P. Veyne, *Quand notre monde est devenu chrétien: 312–394* (Paris, 2007) 239–40; Kulikowski, *Triumph of Empire*, 270. On the association of security and orthodoxy, see F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408–450* (Berkeley, 2006) 39–40; cf. P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison, 1992) 149; M. Kahlos, *Forbearance and Tolerance: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London, 2009) 108–11, and 'Ditches of Destruction: Cyril of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Public Security', *ByzZ* 107 (2014) 659–90. L. M. Frenkel, 'Peace and Harmony at Church Councils and in the Roman Empire under Theodosius II', *AHC* 48 (2016/17) 70–86, highlights how ambitious Churchmen used the rhetoric of peace to defeat their opponents. P. Maraval, 'Le devoir religieux des empereurs: de la tolérance à la répression', in Baslez, *Chrétiens persecuteurs*, 48–57, traces the tightening links between Church and state; cf. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 321–22; Drake, 'Intolerance', 213–14.

[33] As Peter Van Nuffelen points out to us (pers. comm.). Gotter, 'Zwischen Christentum und Staatsraison', makes a similar case, contrasting the situation in the fourth century with that of the high empire. He argues, at p. 150, that there was undoubtedly an increase in sectarian violence in the period. J. Hahn, 'The Challenge of Religious Violence', in J. Wienand (ed.), *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century* AD (Oxford, 2015) 379–404 at 398–404, rightly stresses that 'Christian religious violence eroded the monopoly of the late-antique state on the legitimate use of force' (p. 398). The violence between competing factions in Rome in 366, described by Ammianus Marcellinus 27.3.11–14, is a notable and early instance of secular power being outmatched by religious; see Hahn, 'Challenge of Religious Violence', 384–85. See also R. Pfeilschifter, *Die Spätantike: Der eine Gott und die vielen Herrscher*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 2017) 116–20.

[34] John of Ephesus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.3.13, 26–34 (*CSCO* 105, pp. 153–67); Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.18 (pp. 212–14 Bidez and Parmentier); cf. Rochow, 'Heidenprozesse', 120–30; G. Greatrex, 'Moines, militaires et défense de la frontière orientale au VI^{e} s.', in A. Lewin and

Constantinople led the charge, albeit abetted by ecclesiastical leaders. On other occasions, as when Tiberius was still *caesar*, rulers might be urged to undertake persecution of heretical groups; John of Ephesus, who recounts the episode, describes with satisfaction how the *caesar* rebuffed the Patriarch John Scholasticus' attempts to act against opponents of Chalcedon. Even emperors such as Justin I and Justinian came under such pressure: the former was incited by Pope Hormisdas to bring all bishops into line with the Council of Chalcedon, even if force were necessary; the latter was evidently obliged by Pope Agapitus to reverse his entire policy of conciliation with the Council's adversaries, ousting Patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople and subsequently condemning Severus of Antioch explicitly.[35] Similar instances may be found at the provincial level, such as the well-known case of Orestes and Cyril of Alexandria in 415, where open confrontations broke out between monks loyal to the latter and the forces of the former; it is worth noting that, as in the case of Tiberius, aspersions were cast on the prefect's Christian credentials. Although the people backed Orestes, it does not appear that Cyril's power was diminished in any way.[36] A century later, governors such as Asiaticus in Syria II simply gave way when crowds prevented them from ejecting troublesome bishops from their see; given the violence that erupted here around the same time, culminating in the massacre of hundreds of monks, one can understand this reluctance.[37]

P. Pellegrini (eds.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest* (Oxford, 2007) 285–97 at 291; Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 313–17, 329; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 303. In this case at least, the contention of Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 111, cf. McLynn, 'Christian Controversy', 34–37, that such violence is the work of rigorists rather than the populace seems unconvincing. See rather Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 93: 'Already by the year 400, orthodoxy was the only road to acceptance by the populace,' a view echoed by MacMullen, 'Cultural and Political Changes', 484–95; Meier, 'Monarch', 516–17. Compare the anti-pagan fervour in Carthage in 401, on which see B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Oxford, 2011) 448–49; Magalhães de Oliveira, *Potestas Populi*, 227–51.

[35] Tiberius: John of Ephesus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.1.37 (*CSCO* 105, pp. 46–47). Justin I: see Vasiliev, *Justin I*, 205 (quoting extracts from Hormisdas' letter, to be found in *Collectio Avellana*, *Epistula* 238); cf. Menze, *Justinian*, 31–57. On the impact of Agapitus' visit, see e.g. Stein, *Bas-Empire II*, 382–85; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 272–73; cf. Leppin, *Justinian*, 185–88.

[36] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.13–14 (*GCS* NF 1, pp. 357–60). See, among others, Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 220; É. Fournier, 'Exiled Bishops in the Christian Empire: Victims of Imperial Violence', in H. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2006) 157–66 at 164–65; Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 110–11; Drake, 'Intolerance', 200–201; Hahn, 'Challenge of Religious Violence', 394–97.

[37] Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.34 (pp. 133–34 Bidez and Parmentier); cf. P. Peeters, 'Hypatius et Vitalien: autour de la succession de l'empereur Anastase', repr. in his *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales*, vol. 2 (Brussels, 1951) 233–75 at 252–58; Greatrex, 'Moines', 286–87; Meier,

I am deliberately emphasising here, by the choice of these examples, the inversion of what one might have expected in a hierarchical society. For although modern scholars generally insist on the paramount importance of the imperial office and the top-down nature of Late Antique society, it is striking just how much influence the people and Church leaders could wield, as Anthony Kaldellis, for instance, has emphasised.[38] It is possible therefore that some of the debate about 'intolerance' is misplaced, in that it focuses on the state's crushing of opposition and suppression of dissent. As we saw in the previous section, the Roman imperial court was subject to vigorous lobbying by interested parties. Theodosius I even felt it necessary to publish a definition of orthodoxy and to tighten restrictions on heretics. By the Council of Chalcedon in 451 the full apparatus of state had become involved, as secular figures took a lead role in chairing proceedings. Even if the emperor – in this case, Marcian – was able to exert his influence in determining the outcome, he struggled to impose the Council's decisions on the Eastern empire. Egyptian bishops present at the Council feared for their lives on their return, and upon Marcian's death in 457, the patriarch of Egypt, Proterius, was murdered by his opponents. Imperial troops had likewise to be deployed in Palestine in order to ensure the return of the newly promoted Patriarch of Jerusalem, Juvenal; even with their assistance, he struggled to gain control.[39]

The factions should not be omitted from this picture. United, they narrowly failed to unseat Justinian in Constantinople. In the same way, combined with other parties, they caused serious problems for Patriarch Gregory of Antioch in the late 580s: he stood accused of adultery, among other charges, and the case was brought to Constantinople before he was acquitted.[40] On the other hand, when Patriarch Peter Mongus of Alexandria

Anastasios I., 314; cf. n. 12 above. See further the case of Hypatius at Jerusalem, discussed at p. 405 below, also in 516, and cf. Anastasius' difficulties in the face of disturbances in 511, involving the Chalcedonian Patriarch Macedonius, and in 512. In the former case, the emperor found himself in a precarious position, cf. Dijkstra and Greatrex, 'Patriarchs and Politics', *contra* Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 410–13; see also Meier, 'Monarch', 531.

[38] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 88 (cf. his remarks at p. 110) aptly cites a maxim of Agapetus addressed to Justinian, insisting on the importance of ruling willing subjects lest they turn violent. Kaldellis concentrates on the popular element, while we are devoting more attention to the ecclesiastical figures.

[39] See Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 258; cf. Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 319–20 on allegations that Dioscorus threatened to rebel against Marcian. The fear of the Egyptian bishops for their lives, should they accept Leo's Tome, is palpable; *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.1.4.48, 56. See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 148–49, 154–55, on Juvenal and Proterius; cf. G. Siebigs, *Kaiser Leo I: Das oströmische Reich in den ersten drei Jahren seiner Regierung (457–460 n. Chr.)* (Berlin, 2010) 274–93, 341–45 (on the latter).

[40] Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.7 (p. 226 Bidez and Parmentier); cf. Rochow, 'Die Heidenprozesse', 124–25, and n. 34 above.

found himself challenged by harder-line anti-Chalcedonian monks in the 480s, the circus partisans proved an important source of support. Moreover, in an effort to rally support to his cause, the beleaguered patriarch deliberately organised a persecution of pagans, thus unleashing further violence.[41] As Wolf Liebeschuetz suggests, the factions may likewise have been involved in the persecution of high-ranking pagans undertaken in Constantinople and Antioch, in which Gregory was caught up, between 578 and 588.[42]

The picture that emerges therefore is of a somewhat chaotic violence, perhaps more often perpetrated by interest groups, such as monks or the *philoponoi* in Alexandria, than by imperial agents. The much-discussed instances of temple destruction in the late fourth century belong likewise in this category: they were not initiated by the emperor. But as with the case of the synagogue in Callinicum – and others elsewhere around the same time – the perpetrators suffered no punishment; so also the murderers of Hypatia; likewise those who assassinated George of Cappadocia in Alexandria.[43] The chilling reply of Zeno in 489 to Jews who complained about the deaths caused in Antioch is worth citing in this context: 'Why did they burn only the corpses of the Jews? They ought to have burned live Jews too'.[44] The limits of imperial power are illustrated by the contrasting fates of two prominent figures under Leo, the *praefectus vigilum* Menas and the *quaestor* Isocasius, both narrated by the *Chronicon Paschale*. The former

[41] See Zachariah of Mytilene, *Vita Severi* 101 (*PO* 2, p. 101). The reference to factions is clear from the gloss, referring to *Venetoi* and *Prasinoi*; cf. Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.2c (*CSCO* 84, p. 6). On the events in Alexandria, see C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, 1997) 327–29; E. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria* (Berkeley, 2010) 233–43, with Dijkstra, this volume, p. 304; cf. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 260–62. Of course, Church and factions could also clash, as at Jerusalem in 614: see Dagron, *Hippodrome*, 178–80.

[42] See n. 34 above; cf. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 265, 268–69; Whitby, 'Factions', 453; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 242. Whitby has made the plausible suggestion that the upsurge in factional violence in the late fifth and sixth century stems also from an awareness of what it had accomplished for Church leaders: see his 'Violence', 241–42, and 'Factions', 452.

[43] Cf. Krause, *Gewalt*, 91 (quoted above). On the temples and other cases, see e.g. Caseau, 'Christianisation', 16–17; on George, see Hahn, 'Challenge of Religious Violence', 388, with Dijkstra, this volume, p. 287, though the former notes that other factors were involved in his assassination. See further n. 18 above and cf. Magalhães de Oliveira, *Potestas Populi*, 289–90, on the powerlessness of the government in general.

[44] Malalas, *Chronographia* 15.15 (pp. 316–17 Thurn); trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Melbourne, 1986) 218–19. R. Kosinski, *The Emperor Zeno: Religion and Politics* (Cracow, 2010) 176, suggests that this reply represented Zeno's attempt to deflect the complaint, essentially pointing out that matters could have been worse. Although the emperor did dismiss the *comes Orientis*, he was clearly also reluctant to punish the perpetrators. Cf. Whitby, 'Violence', 242; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 157. Philip Wood (pers. comm.) rightly suggests to us that emperors of non-aristocratic origins, such as Leo and Zeno, might seek to shore up their position by playing on their orthodoxy (and opposition to those who were not, such as Aspar); cf. Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 528–31 (on Leo).

was brought to trial in public in the hippodrome; when the emperor had Menas tripped up to humiliate him in the course of proceedings, this sufficed as a pretext for the crowd to seize him, lead him away and murder him. Isocasius, accused of paganism, also found himself arraigned in public; he was held responsible for recent rioting and accused of a paganism he did not deny. Yet his courage in the face of his predicament stood him in good stead: the people who witnessed his words of defence applauded him and he was allowed to go free, having been baptised. By the end of the following century, such clemency had grown rarer: during the persecution of pagans reported by John of Ephesus, the Church historian emphasises the people's suspicion of aristocratic cover-ups in order to protect pagans, whereas it was by just such support from fellow pagan officials that Isocasius had earned his reprieve.[45] The increasing strength of the people is perceptible in this last case, moreover, in the fact that it was they who took the initiative, rather than the emperor.

Conclusion

Violence, much of it linked to religion, was rife in the Late Antique world. No doubt many regions and communities were able to overcome their differences to live in harmony, as, for instance, the citizens of Amida did until the anti-Chalcedonian firebrand Sergius stormed into the church shared by the two communities and threw out the Chalcedonian priest. The insistence with which some leaders sought to whip up hostility to their adversaries, whether Christians or others, demonstrates that it required some effort to orchestrate this violence.[46]

I have attempted to advance the argument that most of this violence was initiated not by the state, but by individuals or crowds. We are looking at a situation closer to 'mob rule' than to the machinations of an oppressive state. Minorities, heretics and pagans had more to fear from ambitious bishops and angry crowds than from the state; they were frequently a useful target of the government in order to pacify the people, for instance

[45] *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 465, 467 (pp. 594–96 Dindorf). Van Nuffelen, 'Wise Madness', 243–45, sees the first episode as a miscalculation by Leo, while Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 459–61, sees it rather as an attempt by the emperor to demonstrate his power over the aristocracy. The latter is closer to the mark, but a certain pandering to the people is also evident. See n. 34 above on the persecution of pagans under Tiberius and Maurice. On the case of Isocasius, see Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 312–13.

[46] See Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 24–32, 111 on this; cf. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 183–84. On Sergius, see John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, pp. 101–103), discussed also by S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis* (Berkeley, 1990) 53–54, 72–73; Gaddis, *'There Is No Crime'*, 256–57; he had previously destroyed a synagogue at Amida, see John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 17, pp. 91–93).

in the case of Tiberius II, already cited, or the periodic clamp-downs on pagans instituted by Justinian, probably linked to the ravages of the plague.[47] In general, the Roman state found its power and defences hindered by the need to keep a lid on the violence that flared up intermittently throughout the empire, whether one thinks of the troops despatched by Justinian to Alexandria in the 530s, vainly trying to shore up the position of the anti-Chalcedonian Patriarch Theodosius, or of those needed to quell disturbances at Ulpiana in the Balkans in the 550s.[48] On occasion, to be sure, troops might be despatched to expel anti-Chalcedonian bishops or monks, but it is significant that these efforts soon ground to a halt when hostilities flared up with Persia. On the whole, every emperor, however theologically engaged, sought to reconcile opposing groups; these efforts foundered, as at Callinicum in 568, on the intransigence of the basic constituencies involved, in this case the monks. Conciliatory emperors and even Church leaders, as John of Ephesus discovered to his cost, struggled to overcome divisions.[49] Maurice's harsh persecutions along the Eastern frontier in the 590s may indicate a more pugnacious approach, but even in this case our sources note that it was Bishop Domitian of Melitene who led the charge.[50]

[47] See above, pp. 399–400 on Tiberius. M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians: Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Göttingen, 2003) 587–99, on the waves of persecutions under Justinian in 545/46 and 562, cf. pp. 298–302; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 309–10. As Meier notes, Justinian, *Novellae Constitutiones* 77, of uncertain date, addresses the people of Constantinople, insisting on the need to avoid blasphemy so as not to incur God's wrath. *Contra* Meier, this tone resembles that of the measures taken in the 570s and 580s. Cf. Carrié and Rousselle, *Empire romain en mutation*, 425, noting how the Roman state had always struggled to protect individuals against groups. Justinian, having initially supported the Blues (see n. 30 above), later intermittently made an effort to clamp down on their violence, instilling fear in them for a time: see *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 527 (p. 617 Dindorf); cf. Malalas, *Chronographia* 17.18 (p. 351 Thurn) with Whitby, 'Violence', 229, cf. 245 (on his indulging the factions at other moments); Bell, *Social Conflict*, 270–72. The 'law and order' attitude of Procopius (and perhaps Malalas, cf. Greatrex, 'Malalas and Procopius', 173–74 with n. 21), on which see Whitby, 'Violence', 234, becomes more comprehensible in this context. Cf. also P. Van Nuffelen, 'Religious Violence in Late Antiquity', in G. G. Fagan et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2020) 512–29, drawing out the violence of the period in general and noting instances of lynch justice.

[48] Stein, *Bas-Empire II*, 384–85, on Narses' mission to Alexandria. On Ulpiana, see Procopius, *Gothic War* 4.25.13; cf. Whitby, 'Factions', 457.

[49] See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 319–21, 327, on Callinicum and the failure of John's negotiations among quarreling elements of the anti-Chalcedonian Church. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 172–76, offers more detail and characterises the outcome as the triumph of the 'non-rational elements' over 'political common sense'. Pfeilschifter, *Spätantike*, 118–19, rightly points out that negotiations over doctrine were essentially a zero-sum game, which greatly reduced the room for compromise.

[50] See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 334–35; cf. Greatrex, 'Moines', 292–93.

It is fitting to conclude with one of the central figures of the Nika riot, the man who might have unseated Justinian and ruled the empire himself. For what is striking about the hapless Hypatius is the extent of his passivity, even timidity, in the face of popular opinion. We may observe him twice being buffeted by the crowd, each time buckling under the pressure. First, in 516, he was present in Jerusalem at a tense moment, when the *dux* Anastasius was seeking to impose a non-Chalcedonian patriarch on the city. The nominee, John, promised to accept communion with the staunch opponent of the Council, Severus of Antioch, on a fixed day; thousands of monks, however, then converged on the city, obliging the governor to flee and allowing the patriarch to escape his obligation. All eyes then turned to Hypatius – who promptly signalled his disagreement with Severus and lavished donations on the communities there.[51] He had drawn the right conclusion; the Emperor Anastasius, Hypatius' uncle, never succeeded in ousting John. Sixteen years later, when the rioting mob came upon him after his dismissal from the imperial palace, the elderly pretender again acceded to popular pressure, accompanying the delighted rioters to the hippodrome and taking his place in the imperial box. There is every reason to suppose, as he later insisted to Justinian, that he had never sought the throne himself. Rather, as before, he had concluded that he had little choice but to agree to the demands placed on him.[52] Now I am not suggesting that Hypatius was ill-advised to bow to pressure; his long-serving colleague Celer rightly observed, during the deliberations that led to the accession of Justin I, that unless the courtiers reached a decision quickly, they would be obliged to accept the popular choice.[53] Rather, these cases serve to confirm what has been argued here, namely that it was the waning power of the emperor and the waxing voice of the Church and the people that were responsible for much of the violence that disturbed the Late Antique world.[54]

[51] See G. Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius, *quem vidit validum Parthus sensitque timendum*: An Investigation of His Career', *Byzantion* 66 (1996) 120–42 at 122–23, derived from Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 56 (pp. 148–52 Schwartz). Cf. Peeters, 'Hypatius et Vitalien', 236–41; Haarer, *Anastasius*, 161; Meier, *Anastasios I.*, 315–16.

[52] Greatrex, 'Nika Riot', 76–80, for these events (on Sunday 18 January); cf. Pfeilschifter, *Kaiser*, 194–96.

[53] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis* 1.93 (p. 427 Reiske).

[54] Cf. Meier, 'Monarch', 528–29, on the erosion of imperial authority by the end of the fifth century. Anastasius and Justinian sought to re-establish it, he argues, by emphasising the sacrality of the imperial office. Van Nuffelen, 'Religious Violence', optimistically argues that the state was seeking to defuse tensions by failing to clamp down on perpetrators of violence.

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